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JOHN JAMES JOSEPH GOURGAS

1777 - 1865

Conservator of Scottish Rite Freemasonry

By

ILL.: J. HUGO TATSCH, 33°

Acting Librarian and Curator

Supreme Council 33°, A.A.S.R., N.M.J.

With an Introduction by

ILL.: MELVIN MAYNARD JOHNSON, 33°

M.:P.: Sovereign Grand Commander



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Boston, Massachusetts
1938

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JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

(1826-1895)

Illustrations of the Birds of America

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Plate I

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	ix
By Ill. . Melvin Maynard Johnson, 33° M. . P. . Sovereign Grand Commander	
SYLLABUS	xi
I THE FAMILY BACKGROUND	3
II THE MASONIC BACKGROUND	13
III THE MASONIC ENTRANCE OF GOURGAS	19
IV GOURGAS AS GRAND SECRETARY GENERAL, 1813-1832	27
V GOURGAS AS GRAND COMMANDER, 1832-1851	34
VI THE EVENTS OF 1860-1867	40
VII "DE MORTUIS NIL NISI BONUM"	47
FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	54
APPENDIX: A TENTATIVE GENEALOGY OF THE GOURGAS FAMILY	59
INDEX	65

TABLE 1.1

Year	Population	Urban	Rural	Total
1950	100,000,000	30,000,000	70,000,000	100,000,000
1960	120,000,000	40,000,000	80,000,000	120,000,000
1970	150,000,000	50,000,000	100,000,000	150,000,000
1980	180,000,000	60,000,000	120,000,000	180,000,000
1990	200,000,000	70,000,000	130,000,000	200,000,000
2000	220,000,000	80,000,000	140,000,000	220,000,000
2010	240,000,000	90,000,000	150,000,000	240,000,000
2020	260,000,000	100,000,000	160,000,000	260,000,000
2030	280,000,000	110,000,000	170,000,000	280,000,000
2040	300,000,000	120,000,000	180,000,000	300,000,000
2050	320,000,000	130,000,000	190,000,000	320,000,000
2060	340,000,000	140,000,000	200,000,000	340,000,000
2070	360,000,000	150,000,000	210,000,000	360,000,000
2080	380,000,000	160,000,000	220,000,000	380,000,000
2090	400,000,000	170,000,000	230,000,000	400,000,000
2100	420,000,000	180,000,000	240,000,000	420,000,000

ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE

I	John James Joseph Gourgas.....	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
II	The Country Home of the Gourgases in Switzerland	<i>facing</i>	6
III	The Gourgas Bookplate	<i>facing</i>	22
IV	Rev. Paul Durant; Rev. Henry Durant; Lt. Col. Charles Louis Durant; King Victor Amadeus II.....	<i>facing</i>	38
V	Jean Gourgas II; Bernardina Durant Gourgas; Jean Louis Gourgas I; Anne Marie Perachon Gourgas.....	<i>facing</i>	47

INTRODUCTION

The Sovereign Grand Commander, in his 1937 Allocution, addressed the Supreme Council in part, as follows:

“August 5, 1938, is the One Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the founding of this Supreme Council. The outstanding personality of the founders was John James Joseph Gourgas. It was he who kept the Scottish Rite alive during the years when—but for him—it would have faded out. It was Gourgas, assisted by Yates, who re-vivified the Rite after the great anti-Masonic agitation, and then started our Supreme Council on its career to become the strong, virile and successful organization which it now is. For several years Gourgas was, in fact, the whole backbone of the Scottish Rite in the United States. He certainly was in the Northern Jurisdiction, and when the Southern Jurisdiction began again to function actively, it had to obtain from Gourgas both Constitutions and rituals. Gourgas, our first Secretary General, became our third Sovereign Grand Commander in 1832, holding that office until age and infirmity, with what he conceived to be the welfare of the Rite, motivated him to retire in 1851.

“Our Acting Curator and Librarian, Bro. J. Hugo Tatsch, 32°, K.C.C.H., during historical researches—growing out of the aid which he was rendering to Ill. Bro. Baynard in connection with our History—discovered that M. P. Bro. Gourgas was not buried in Weston, Massachusetts, which was his home, nor in New York City where he died on February 14, 1865, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, but in New York Bay Cemetery, Jersey City, N. J., Lot No. 677, Grave No. 3. By one of those singular coincidences which sometimes make life stranger than fiction, the Superintendent of New York Bay Cemetery is Bro. E. H. Jones, 32°, a member of Jersey City Consistory, and the President of the Cemetery Corporation is Ill. James W. McCarthy, 33°, Commander-in-Chief of that Consistory. By their assistance and cooperation, the grave was located, the original burial certificate was brought to light; and on Memorial Day, 1936, Ill. Bro. McCarthy, as Commander-in-Chief, placed a wreath upon the grave.

“Although not ancient in years, nevertheless the small gravestone which marks the grave of Brother Gourgas shows the ravages of time and the elements, and a part of the inscription thereon is illegible. Would it not be suitable that the year 1938, the One Hundred Twenty-fifth year in the life of this Supreme Council, be known as ‘Gourgas Memorial Year,’ that at some meeting during the year his services should be remembered in each body of our Rite by either simple or more elaborate memorial,

including a reference to the life of this stalwart Scottish Rite Mason, this great leader of the Rite in the days of its early struggles? Does his memory not also deserve the erection by this Supreme Council over his grave of a suitable memorial stone?

“If it meets with your approval, Brother Tatsch will be directed to prepare, that we may print, a pamphlet containing a sketch of the life of Brother Gourgass and his Masonic activities; and, at some time during the year, with the assistance of our Illustrious Deputy for New Jersey, of Ill. Bro. McCarthy, and of the officers and members of the Rite in New Jersey, a simple but suitable memorial will be dedicated by your Grand Commander with appropriate ceremony. A modest appropriation for this purpose is recommended.”

The appropriation was made, and it is planned to erect and dedicate a memorial in 1938.

This brochure, prepared by Ill. Bro. J. Hugo Tatsch, 33°, is an official publication of the Supreme Council. The attention of all Scottish Rite Masons of the Northern Jurisdiction, and especially of all officers of the subordinate Bodies, is called to the third paragraph of the above quotation from the Allocation with a request that the year 1938 shall be referred to as “Gourgass Memorial Year,” and that at some meeting during the year each Body of our Rite shall call to the minds of its brethren the life and services of Ill. Bro. Gourgass.

MELVIN M. JOHNSON, 33°,
Sovereign Grand Commander

Attest:

CHARLES H. SPILMAN, 33°,
Grand Secretary General

SYLLABUS

The following outline is designed to aid speakers in preparing an address on J. J. J. Gourgass from material presented in the accompanying brochure. The closing summary offers opportunity for an *epitomized* presentation of Scottish Rite doctrine, suitable to the occasion. This is left to the speakers, as local conditions and existing circumstances will vary throughout the year.

INTRODUCTION	PAGE
a. The occasion for the meeting and address..... (May be given by presiding officer)	ix
I. THE FAMILY BACKGROUND	
a. Huguenot ancestry	4
b. Flight of ancestors to Switzerland.....	5
c. The immediate family.....	6
d. The family estate	6
e. The early life of Gourgass.....	9
f. Professional and home life.....	9
g. The death of Gourgass.....	12
II. THE MASONIC BACKGROUND	
a. General	13
b. The Rite of Perfection of 25 degrees.....	15
c. Formation of the first Supreme Council, 33°, in 1801.....	16
d. Masonic activities in New York.....	17
III. THE MASONIC ENTRANCE OF GOURGASS	
a. Activities in Ancient Craft Freemasonry.....	19
b. Admission to the high grades.....	22
c. Elevation to the Thirty-third Degree.....	23
d. Gourgass' Masonic activities, 1806-32.....	24
1. Situation different than today.....	24
2. Status of the Craft and high grades.....	24
3. Gourgass' conservative views on publicity.....	25
e. Gourgass and the Consistory of Sublime Princes.....	26

IV. GOURGAS AS SECRETARY GENERAL, 1813-1832

a. The high grades in New York in 1813.....	27
b. Birth of the Northern Supreme Council, 1813.....	28
c. Other Masonic labors of Gourgas.....	28
d. Gourgas as Grand Secretary General.....	29
e. Gourgas and Holbrook	30

V. GOURGAS AS GRAND COMMANDER, 1832-1851

a. Cerneau activity and Gourgas conservatism.....	34
b. Gourgas and Yates	35
c. Developments of 1842-1851	37
d. Resignation as Grand Commander, 1851.....	38
e. The Rite in retrospection.....	39

VI. THE EVENTS OF 1860-1867

a. Autocracy, dissension and final harmony.....	40
b. The passing of Gourgas.....	12, 42
1. Death and burial	12, 42
2. Masonic memorials	49-53
3. Contemporary estimates of Gourgas.....	47-49
4. Closing summary	42-46

JOHN JAMES JOSEPH GOURGAS

STATE OF NEW YORK

JOHN JAMES JOSEPH GOURGAS

1777-1865

CHAPTER I

THE FAMILY BACKGROUND

Some one has said, in effect, that we cannot be too careful in the selection of our ancestors. This remark, with its air of levity, has in it a fundamental verity, and as we meditate upon the qualities which marked John James Joseph Gourgas in his life span of four score and seven years, we realize what a powerful influence heredity expressed through him.

Gourgas was born at Lake Geneva, Switzerland, May 23, 1777,⁽¹⁾ a scion of families who lived, suffered and died during the oppression of the Huguenots in France.⁽²⁾ Their austere virtues were derived from the very soil upon which they lived. The area which they occupied has been described as having a singular and dreary aspect, barren and stony in character. The valleys are winding and narrow, with almost impassable glens, "giving to the Cévennes that peculiarly intricate character which enabled its Protestant inhabitants * * * to offer so stubborn and gallant a resistance to the atrocious persecutions of Louis XIV." This rocky, elevated and sterile region transmitted its ruggedness to its inhabitants. Consequently, we are not surprised to find these traits, exemplified both physically and spiritually, in the life of our Gourgas as we walk with him in New York and Massachusetts during his terrestrial sojourn.

The earliest known member of the family with the Gourgas patronymic, in so far as available documents are concerned, was *Jean Gourgas I* of Sommières, a town in the Province of Languedoc, France. The dates of his birth and death are unknown, but his second marriage of 1639 (to Salomè Subremonde of Massilargues) and his last will and testament of 1673 are of record in family papers still preserved.

No documentary evidence exists of the earlier marriage of Jean Gourgas I, but it is known that his first wife was Susanne Quarde, by whom he had four children, a son, *Jean Gourgas II*, and three daughters. Jean Gourgas II was born in Sommières in 1631, and died there in 1699, while on a visit to his holdings, though he himself was an expatriate, and his actual residence was in Geneva.⁽³⁾ Like his father, he was married twice, first in 1661, to Jeanne Bosquet of Sommières, and twenty years later to *Bernardina Durant* of Esquivives, who was his junior by thirty years.

Bernardina Durant was a heroic woman of Huguenot ancestry. Because of the contributions made by the Durants to the Gourgas stock, it is not amiss to sketch their history. Their ancestry can be traced beyond 1600, but of more immediate interest to us is the *Rev. Paul Durant* of Lunel, France, pastor of the Reformed Church at Gallargues, who was born in the last half of the sixteenth century. He died at Gallargues after 1661. In 1614 he was married to Susanne d'Engarras, by whom he had two sons, the *Rev. Henry Durant* (died 1725), who succeeded the father as Pastor of the Reformed Church at Gallargues; and *Lt. Col. Charles Louis Durant* (died 1746). Durant was an officer in the Swiss Regiment of Des Portes, in the service of King Victor Amadeus II of Sardinia (1666-1732). His faithful attendance upon the ruler of Sardinia, even at the risk of his own life, caused the grateful monarch to reward him in various ways. Among the gifts still extant, which were presented to him by the King, are a beautiful diamond ring and the royal portrait.

The *Rev. Paul Durant* was married a second time, his

choice being *Louisa Ducros*. Bernardina Durant was born of this union in 1661; she died in Geneva in 1729. Persecuted because of her Protestant faith, her husband, Jean Gourgas II, sent her and her two children to Switzerland under cover of night. Unfortunately, they were overtaken by the king's troops near Lyons, and were imprisoned at Montpellier. Quoting from a manuscript in the family archives, we learn that "she was threatened with the stake and fire * * * if she would not return to the detested Roman Catholic faith. With an heroic courage she effected her escape from prison with her two little children and safely got home to her husband. She soon resolved to try a second time to escape from France, and was so fortunate as safely to reach Geneva."

A son increased the family circle of Jean Gourgas II and his second wife just before his departure for France in his sixty-eighth and last year of his life. This son, *Jean Louis Gourgas I*, was born at Geneva, Switzerland, in 1699, and died there in 1756. He married *Anne Marie Perachon* in 1731. Of the several children known to have been born to the foregoing couple, we are interested chiefly in *Jean Louis Gourgas II*, who was born in Geneva in 1738, and who died at Weston, Massachusetts, in 1819.

As has been indicated by the background sketch of the Durants, our Gourgas came of a distinguished ancestry. This was enhanced still more by the descent, on his mother's side, from another patrician family, the Du Pans. Jean Louis Gourgas II was married in 1764 to *Ulbiana Nicasia Du Pan*, an attractive young woman of 17, a native of Holland. Her father was Marc Du Pan, a Captain in the Garrison of Geneva and a member of the Genevan Council of Two Hundred. Her mother was Helen Emerentiane De Rengers of Leyden. It was through the Du Pan and De Rengers families that our Gourgas assumed the name which appears only once in his Masonic papers—*Jean Jaques Joseph Du Pan De Rengers*.

One of the family domiciles in Switzerland was located at Plein Palais, of which a painting has been preserved in

the Gourgass family. (*See illustration.*) It served as the model for homes built at Weston when scions of the Gourgass family established themselves in Massachusetts during the succeeding century. Here was kept a large library, of which some volumes are still in the possession of an American descendant.

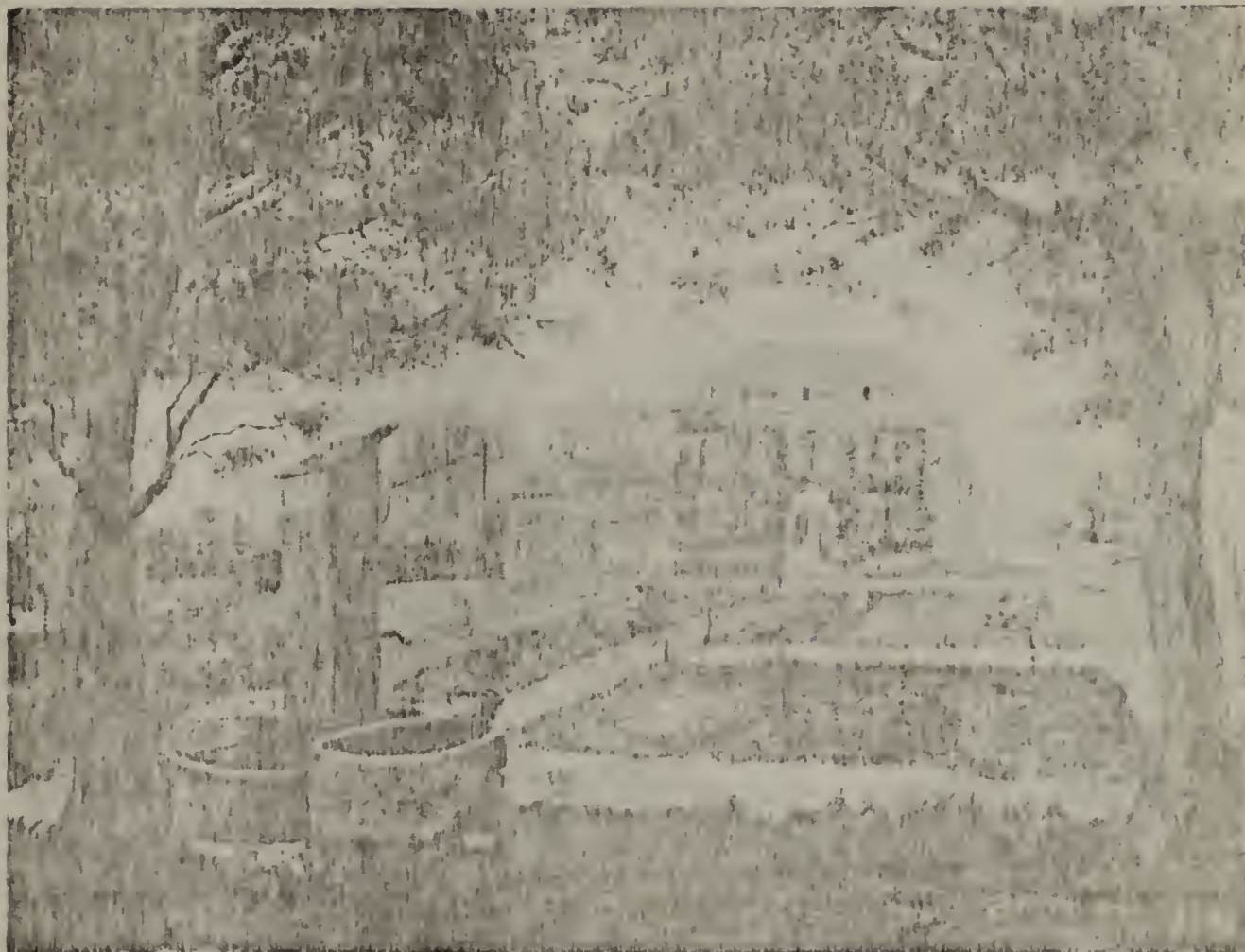
THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY

Our illustrious Masonic brother was one of seven children, all natives of Geneva, of whom we know four were older than the one in whom we are primarily interested. The oldest was John Mark (Jean Marc), who was born in 1766, and died in 1846. The next was John Jacob (Jean Jacob), who was born in 1768, and died *circa* 1822. Two sisters were Catherine Henriette, who was born in 1771, and died in 1800, and Clarisse Aimée, who was born in 1774, and died in 1796. Still another sister was Adèle (who married John Dubois of Cincinnati); the date of her birth is unknown, but she died in 1843. A brother Johanne is of record, who was born at Geneva *circa* 1770, and said to have died of yellow fever in New Orleans though his death was reported from Charleston in 1807. Family and Masonic archives temporarily inaccessible may reveal further data.

The family of John Mark Gourgass achieved prominence in Massachusetts, one son, Francis R. Gourgass, becoming State Senator. He was also publisher of the Concord "Freeman." It is through this son that the family name remains extant, as no descendants of the other brothers are known.

THE FAMILY ESTATE

The close association of Gourgass with his oldest brother permits one to draw upon the family records of John Mark Gourgass in order to sketch the environment which contributed to the character, the traits and proclivities of the man under direct consideration. Being the oldest son, John Mark assumed charge of the existing family archives, among which are found a list of the "goods, moveable and immoveable," titles and



THE COUNTRY HOME OF THE GOURGASES IN SWITZERLAND

The accompanying illustration is made from an eighteenth century painting now in the possession of John Mark Gourgas IV. A notation on the back indicates that it was the country residence of Jean Louis Gourgas I at Plein Palais, Switzerland. Here the Gourgas children spent happy years, and the oldest son patterned his own house in America after it when he settled at Weston, Massachusetts.

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rights, taken when the estate of our Gourgases' grandfather, Jean Louis Gourgases I (1699-1756), was inventoried. The assets reached the astonishing total of £151,645, equal in modern computation to at least \$750,000, and doubtless worth much more, considering the purchasing power of money in those days. Of this amount, £138,347 was in the form of investments, life interests, etc. Bequests included £100 to a library, and betokened an interest in books which actuated not only our Gourgases, but all of the family. The inventory of the personal library of the grandfather stirs the heart of the bibliophile. There were 1,119 books in *folio* alone! The staunch Protestantism of the grandsire is shown by such tomes as Sherlock's *Préservatif contre le Papisme* (La Haye), and the philosophical bent is indicated by the same author's *Traité de la Mort* and *De l'Immortalité de l'Ame*. Volumes on early geography, travels, history, the natural sciences, economics and other representative subjects portray excellent taste and a well-rounded selection of reading matter. A native caution is shown by the selection of *De la Charlatanerie des Savans, par Mencken*, published in 1715.⁽⁴⁾ A list of ancient atlases concludes the list. With the numerous travel books in mind, and the adventurous spirit which brought the lovers of religious liberty to the New World in later years, it can be believed that the young Gourgases of the family pored over the maps with the same intense spirit that animated Sir Francis Drake as a boy, when he gave rapt attention to the tales of sailors at the Devon seaside.

The above mentioned inventory lists medals and curios which came to the fore again during the dark days of 1793 in Paris, when the economic disasters of the French Revolution brought misfortune to the house of Gourgases, and investments crumbled into dust over night. Family plate and other treasures had to be sold.

The widow of Jean Louis Gourgases died in 1781; her estate had shrunk, presumably through gifts during her lifetime, to £30,288, though this was not the final figure, as certain assets

could not be appraised definitely at the time. Funds held for her use in life, totaling £16,698, were distributed to the children within a few weeks after her death.

THE DISASTER OF 1793

An inventory of the fortune of J. L. Gourgas II, the father of our Gourgas, made in 1781, and continued as the years went on, is a revealing document. From it we obtain the names and the dates of birth of Gourgas' brothers and sisters, and witness the solicitude of the father for their welfare. Life insurance was taken out promptly; tontines are mentioned. From an annual income running into five figures, the fortune shrank with amazing rapidity in 1793, through French defalcation and repudiation. It is pathetic to read of the sale of family heirlooms, plate, antiques, conchological specimens, a "chambre obscure," and even a stalactite; a collection of butterflies; "some pieces of glass"; books, bottles and casks of old wine; statuary—"un Venus gréque et autres antiquites"; "ma collection de mineralogie et lithologie"; and "un archet de violon." A concluding entry records the sale of a violin itself for £5, though a guitar brought £14. Years later, in America, John Mark's love of music is shown by a memorandum in his own books, "paid Howard to fiddle one evening, \$7.00."

The record book of the father closes in 1797. This is the very time that his son, John Mark, severed his own partnership with Daniel Hoofstetter in London, which had been commenced in 1791 for wholesale trade in Mediterranean products. Each partner had contributed £2,000 to the capital stock. The French Revolution ruined the business, and notes of losses, caused by French raids on commerce, appear in the account books.

The son's personal record books,⁽⁵⁾ re-opened in 1802, show that removal to America was contemplated as may be seen by entries therein relating to the purchase of books dealing with America, such as Ramsey's *History of the American Revolu-*

tion, in two volumes, and Davis' *Travels in America*. Mention is made also of going on board the "Galen" on July 12. The last English entry is July 26, "Postage to the two friends in New York, 2/6."

THE EARLY LIFE OF GOURGAS

With the background thus presented, let us follow the fortunes of the Gourgases as they ventured into a new life in the land which beckoned to them across the seas. The strong ties which are so characteristic of Continental European families served to keep them together as a group when the time came to break away from old associations. They sailed from England August 5, 1803—a significant date for our Gourgas, for exactly ten years later he was elevated to the Thirty-third Degree in a Fraternity which was apparently far from his thoughts while in Europe. Arriving at Boston September 17, 1803, the fourteenth anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution, they took rooms with a Mrs. Lewis at 65 Cornhill. John Mark Gourgas paid \$97.50 "for board and Lodging of 3 weeks for my family, 5 individuals at 5D. & 3 ditto at 2-1/2 D." It may be assumed that this included John Mark and his wife; his father and mother; his sister Adèle, and the three small daughters of John Mark—Peggy, Margaret and Clarisse. The two brothers, John Jacob, and our John James Joseph, looked after themselves. Later a house was rented in Dorchester, and subsequently the family moved to Milton⁽⁶⁾ and then to Weston. It was at Weston where our Gourgas spent the summers in his declining years, and where he was consulted by his successors in the Supreme Council when they sought information and advice in Scottish Rite affairs.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

John James Joseph Gourgas lived some months in Boston and vicinity after his arrival, as there is record of his brother John Mark paying \$1.00 road tax on his account in July, 1804. So it may be assumed that Gourgas went to New York to stay

in that year. He pursued his profession as an accountant, and in later years was in business as a merchant. Though he never amassed a fortune, he apparently prospered through habits of thrift. He was a typical representative of the better European immigrants whose contributions to the development and stability of this nation during its early years have always been regarded highly by economists and historians.

PERSONAL TRAITS AND TASTES

Protestant to the core, as was natural when considering the sufferings which his Huguenot ancestors had experienced, Gourgas was a Christian in religion. Of his own views we know but little, but if we judge by the library with which the oldest brother surrounded himself—and to which our Gourgas had access—his Christianity was marked by a liberalism which found congenial expression in the tenets of Freemasonry. Gourgas himself was a lover and owner of books, many of which (in French, English and Latin) escaped the ravages of the years and are now safely lodged in the Library of the Supreme Council at Boston, all bearing numerous notations in his own characteristic handwriting, and containing his book-plate—itsself a treasure keenly sought after by collectors. (*See Plate III, facing page 22.*) He was continually buying books in Paris; others were procured from London and in America. He was deeply interested in the history of the Crusades and the Knights Templar, and was doubtless a believer in the descent of Freemasonry from the chivalric orders. Unquestionably this was heightened by the generally accepted belief along such lines, as well as by his own Continental European background. To this we must also add the influence of the early *hautes grades* rituals, especially of the vengeance grades. These would appeal to him in view of his ancestors' experiences with Roman Catholic persecutions in France.

THE HOME LIFE OF GOURGAS

“Happy the people whose annals are blank.” (*Carlyle.*) There is no extensive history of the Gourgas family, and such

The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation. It is only about thirty years old, and its history is therefore a history of the present. The second is the fact that the United States is a large nation. It is the largest country in the world, and its history is therefore a history of the future. The third is the fact that the United States is a free nation. It is the only country in the world where the people have the right to elect their representatives, and its history is therefore a history of the present and the future.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

The history of the United States is a history of the present and the future. It is a history of the people who have lived in this country, and of the people who are living in it now. It is a history of the things that have happened in this country, and of the things that are happening in it now. It is a history of the people who have made this country what it is, and of the people who are making it what it will be. It is a history of the things that have made this country a free country, and of the things that are making it a free country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a young country, and of the things that are making it a young country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a large country, and of the things that are making it a large country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a powerful country, and of the things that are making it a powerful country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a happy country, and of the things that are making it a happy country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a great country, and of the things that are making it a great country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a free country, and of the things that are making it a free country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a young country, and of the things that are making it a young country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a large country, and of the things that are making it a large country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a powerful country, and of the things that are making it a powerful country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a happy country, and of the things that are making it a happy country. It is a history of the things that have made this country a great country, and of the things that are making it a great country.

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facts as may be gleaned are culled from prosaic sources—church records and the inscriptions on tombstones. Gourgas letters in the Supreme Council Archives bear occasional references to change of location, children, and visits to Weston, Massachusetts, in later years—but they are so meager that they add but little to our knowledge of the man and his affairs. It may safely be assumed, however, that he traveled but little, and that his home life was happy. He was married, some time prior to 1808, to Louisa Maria Smidt. An unimposing stone in the family plot in Jersey City, New Jersey, with the name of Louisa Maria, who was interred February 2, 1854, is assumed to be the one marking the burial place of Mrs. Gourgas, as the body lies next to that of Gourgas himself. There was a son, J. J. J. Gourgas, Jr., who was born January 9, 1808; he was buried July 28, 1855. Mention was made by Gourgas in one of his letters of a son Louis, but no further details have been found. The name of Eliza, a daughter, is also encountered. We have positive records of Ulbiana E. H. Gourgas, a daughter presumably born in 1823, whose mortal remains were committed to the earth August 5, 1884. The family plot also contains the grave of Frederick William Gourgas, who was born in New York City, August 11, 1813, and who died September 19, 1863. It may be conjectured that he was a son. A John or Joseph Gourgas, whose relationship is not determined, was buried in the same plot November 8, 1869.

Early in December, 1937, a copy of M. Zimmerman's *Solitude Considered with Respect to its Influence on the Mind and the Heart* [Boston, 1804], bearing the Gourgas bookplate, was called to our attention by a Boston bookseller and promptly acquired. It settled what had been a perplexing question, for on the title page is the inscription, "J. J. J. Gourgas, To Louise Marie Gourgas, *my dear daughter*." She was buried in the Gourgas plot, and next to her lies her husband, John L. Gourgas, the son of John Mark Gourgas of Weston. This was an instance of cousins marrying, and accounts for the burial of the husband in the uncle's plot, rather

than in the father's plot at Weston. The nephew died at Weston, October 5, 1883, age 74, and his wife followed him November 7. Both were buried in Jersey City, November 14, 1883.

Reference to two daughters of Gourgas was made in a letter written by John W. Leonard, the prominent Philadelphia Masonic publisher of the 1850's, to Gourgas from London, August 1, 1856. He requested Gourgas to send him a group portrait of himself and two daughters, "one on each side of you." This was apparently the extent of the family at the time, as Mrs. Gourgas and the oldest son had died within the two years preceding. (Frederick William, mentioned above, may not have been at home, if a son—or he may not have been a member of the immediate family.) Leonard expected an increase in his family within a month, and stated that if the child were a boy, it would be named James Joseph Gourgas Leonard; if a girl, Hannah Eliza Gourgas Leonard.

THE DEATH OF GOURGAS

John James Joseph Gourgas passed away at his residence, 101 West 10th St., New York City, on February 14, 1865. Interment took place at the New York Bay Cemetery, Jersey City, New Jersey, February 18, at 11 A.M. The cause of his demise was briefly recorded as "old age." A Masonic biographer, writing in 1879, stated that Masons and Masonry were largely excluded from his household in his declining years because of the excitement they induced.

CHAPTER II

THE MASONIC BACKGROUND

Neither an individual nor an institution can be studied without knowledge of the background in which either had its setting. To understand Gourgas, and to arrive at a sympathetic appraisal of his work in America as a Mason, we should have a mental picture of the Masonic situation as it existed upon his arrival in America in 1863.

Freemasonry is essentially a British institution, the organization being an outgrowth of the operative Masonic Craft which grew to its greatest height during the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. The conquest of England by the Normans during the eleventh century introduced artistic, scientific and religious activities to a region which up to that time had been one of the frontiers of Europe. The military overlords—the feudal barons who laid the foundations of a new form of government which finally blossomed into the democracy we know today—furthered the operative arts by the construction of fortifications, castles, walls and roads. The Christian Church, whose missionary priests had been in England for several centuries before, had begun to replace its humble structures of wattles and wood with massive monuments of stone, the rough Saxon giving way to more ornate Norman and regal Gothic as the years went on. Within monastic walls were preserved the further developed gentler arts which made life tolerable and pleasant. Music, painting and literature blossomed in the congenial warmth of the religious institutions, which were not only the sole centers of the liberal arts and sciences, but which were the chief outlet for organized activities of any sort. Farming, sheep raising and simple manufac-

ture were also within the compass of the monastic institutions, and so numerous did they become, that more than a thousand sprang up before the dissolution of 1536-39—each of them, in nearly all cases, being just a day's journey from its nearest neighbor. Here it was where the operative craftsman learned the rudiments of the Masonic philosophy which is still preserved in our speculative lectures, acquiring from lay brother and even cleric himself an art more gentle than his own crude and rough surroundings engendered.

Time went on; the sturdy nation grew; the arrogance of kings and lords gave way before the rising power of democracy. In similar fashion, the encroachments of the Church upon the mental and spiritual development of the people were checked, and finally the institution with its headquarters on the banks of the distant Tiber was overthrown, and a priesthood of the English people assumed control. From 1500 to 1700 a transition took place in the Masonic organization wherein our Fraternity of today had its cradle, and from a purely operative we became a purely speculative institution. The premier Grand Lodge of the world was formed in London June 24, 1717. Within a few decades it had spread over England and had also germinated in foreign soil. Freemasonry was introduced into France in 1725, where it lost some of its simple and rugged English character and clothed its essentials in newer and more spectacular forms. The Latin temperament was not content to leave well enough alone, but, seizing upon the fundamentals of liberty, equality and fraternity, drew upon fancy and garbed the teachings with highly dramatic forms in which long suppressed yearnings and long suffered wrongs found startling expression. As we study the origin and development of the hundreds of degrees which sprang up during the eighteenth century, we are struck with admiration for the genius of the individual who conceived the original idea. Whether he was a man of the people, hounded from hovel to garret, or whether he was a Voltaire with unusually developed sympathies for his fellow man, matters not at the moment.

THE RITE OF PERFECTION

Out of the welter of degrees which flooded Continental Europe during the eighteenth century, one system was born which was the principal antecedent of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. This was the Rite of Perfection of twenty-five degrees, which had its source of authority, if not origin, in a Council of the Emperors of the East and West, founded in 1758 and which was sitting in France, presumably at Paris and likewise at Bordeaux, if we accept the high-sounding documents of the period.

One fateful day in 1761, the Council of the Emperors of the East and West drew up a formidable parchment conferring upon Stephen Morin, just about to depart for the West Indies, certain definitely expressed powers. Among them were the right "to form and establish a lodge to receive and multiply the Royal Order of Free and Accepted Masons in all degrees Perfect and Sublime," and "full and entire power to multiply and create Deputy Inspectors in all places where the Sublime Degrees are not established." This year, 1761, is also the date of the "Secret Constitutions." One year later, the "Grand Constitutions and Regulations of 1762" were formulated, and these, together with regulations for subordinate bodies, became the fundamental law of the Rite.

Morin arrived in San Domingo in 1763, having been detained in England as a prisoner of war. In 1764, he issued a patent of membership to Ossonde Verriere at Port au Prince. Between 1763 and 1767, he created Henry Andrew Francken, of Jamaica, his first Deputy Inspector General, and through creation of others by Francken and those whom he subsequently deputed, the Rite spread. At least ten bodies of the Rite were established before the close of the century, though but a few survived.

Among the brethren created Deputy Inspectors General by Francken was Moses Michael Hays of New York, later of Newport and Boston. Hays created eight deputies at one time in Philadelphia in 1781, and one of these, Barend M. Spitzer,

appointed Hyman Isaac Long a Deputy at Kingston in 1795. Long, in turn, designated seven at Charleston, South Carolina, in 1796. Two of these were Alexandre François Auguste de Grasse Tilly, and his father-in-law, Jean Baptiste Marie Noel Delahogue, who had fled to America from France following the outbreak of the French Revolution. De Grasse was the son of the famous Admiral De Grasse Tilly, who headed the French naval forces aiding Washington in his campaign against Cornwallis at Yorktown. Washington's intelligent use of the French navy illustrates his rare qualities as a far seeing naval strategist, as well as a military genius. He put into practice his opinion, expressed in 1780, that "In any operation, and under all circumstances, a decisive naval superiority is to be considered as a fundamental principle, and the basis upon which every hope of success must ultimately depend."

In Charleston at the time were other Masons, with whom de Grasse and Delahogue soon associated themselves. They became active in the community and the genius of de Grasse as an organizer—already well exemplified in his military career in San Domingo and France, and which was to be proved still further in later years as one of Napoleon's officers in France, Italy and Spain—expressed itself in the most congenial field of Freemasonry. In 1793 he was Master of the Lodge La Candeur, and in 1799 he became charter member and the first Master of the Lodge La Réunion Française, very evidently composed of other French refugees. In 1801 he was appointed Grand Marshal of the Grand Lodge of South Carolina, which his close friend, Lieutenant Colonel John Mitchell, was then serving as Grand Secretary.

FORMATION OF THE FIRST SUPREME COUNCIL

Momentous events took place in 1801, the year that witnessed the birth of the Mother Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in the World, of which John Mitchell was the first Grand Commander, and de Grasse and Delahogue two of the nine organizers.

It was this Supreme Council which announced the Grand Constitutions of 1786 to the world, under which the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite system of thirty-three degrees operates.

In 1802, de Grasse was named Grand Commander, and his father-in-law, Delahogue, Lieutenant Grand Commander, of the Supreme Council of the French West Indian Islands. The revolution of the blacks forced the French to flee. Consequently, in 1804, de Grasse went to Paris, where a year later he founded the Supreme Council of France, holding office as Grand Commander until 1818. During his final European sojourn, he established other Supreme Councils in Italy in 1805, in Spain in 1809, and in Belgium in 1817.

MASONIC ACTIVITIES IN NEW YORK

French Masons were active not only in Charleston, but elsewhere in America. Their ateliers were established in leading seaports from New Orleans to Boston. One Achille Huet La Chelle, whose name is also encountered in a study of the high grades, appeared in New York in 1797 as a Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of France and under its auspices founded a lodge, "L'Union Française" by name. He refused to revoke or annul the charter when called to task for it by the Grand Lodge of New York, and several of its members—who had been drawn from the membership of the Lodge L'Unité Americaine No. 12—were "inhibited from visiting or otherwise associating with any of the Lodges in this city until further orders." Among them was John Gabriel Tardy, who later became an intimate friend and associate of our Gourgas. These brethren of Gallic origin and temperament, like their confrères elsewhere in American Freemasonry, had a natural aptitude for creating inharmony in Craft circles—a fact worthy of remembrance in a study of the Masonry of the Rite of later years. Investigation developed that dissensions in L'Unité Americaine were responsible for the formation of a new lodge under French authority, and upon admission of irregularity in forming a lodge in this manner, the petition of

twenty-eight recalcitrants for a dispensation was granted, and the Lodge L'Union Française created under the ægis of the Grand Lodge of New York. A warrant was authorized June 6, 1798, and the Lodge became No. 14 (now No. 17) on the official roster, with Tardy as Senior Warden. The original warrant was returned to La Chelle as Provincial Grand Master of San Domingo under France. La Chelle, it should be said in passing, had also formed a Rose Croix Chapter in 1797 under the name of "Triple Union," which was followed by another in 1806, with the name of "Triple Amité." He had previously formed "Triple Unité" (1794) in Baltimore.

CHAPTER III

THE MASONIC ENTRANCE OF GOURGAS

With the family and Masonic background thus briefly sketched, let us bring John James Joseph Gourgass upon the Masonic stage. Leaving Boston some months after his arrival in 1803, he obtained employment in New York as an accountant. It cannot be said definitely who his first employer was, but we do know that in 1807 and 1808 he was with Mr. Stephen Richards, a jeweler at 160 Broadway, and in 1822 he was employed with Dias & Crassous, merchants.

ACTIVITIES IN ANCIENT CRAFT FREEMASONRY

It was natural that Gourgass, a Swiss of French ancestry, should crave harmonious associations among other French-speaking Protestants in New York. We are not surprised to find him seeking Masonic light in the well-known Lodge L'Union Française, which had been instituted in 1797. The record books of the Lodge indicate that on May 19, 1806, he was debited \$22.00 for his admission to the First Degree, and \$.75 for dues for the month of June. He was credited May 21 with the payment of \$22.75 covering these charges. The minutes for June 2, 1806, record that "augmentation de salaire pr le F.'. Gourgass est réclamée par le T.'.C.'.F.'.Terrible; un Seance extraordinaire aura lieu a cet effet. Le Fr. Lescot [sic] obtiendra la meme faveur, et en meme Seance." This typically French Masonic language is to the effect that the Senior Deacon announced Brother Gourgass and Brother Escot (the correct name) as being ready for their next degree, and that a special meeting of the Lodge would be held for advancing the Entered Apprentices. It has always been assumed by previous biographers that Gourgass was initiated June 2, but the records of the meeting held that day do not report this to

be a fact, and as he is referred to as *Brother* Gourgass, with no record of initiation on June 2, the conjecture that he was initiated May 19, 1806, becomes an assurance. This is further supported by the fact that the minutes for May 26, 1806—the date which ushered in the use of a new volume—do not mention Gourgass, but do mention the initiation of J. P. Escot, with whom Gourgass was subsequently advanced and raised. We do know, from the original returns of the Lodge to the Grand Lodge, that Gourgass was initiated in 1806, and this is corroborated by the dates of the debits and credits to his account for the Entered Apprentice fee.

Because it has been vehemently denied that Gourgass ever received the Fellow Craft and Master Mason Degrees, and asserted by Robert B. Folger that he was not advanced until 1807, the records of the Lodge L'Union Française for June 9, 1806, were specially examined for the interesting testimony they furnish. After work had been concluded in the First and Second Degrees, it was announced that a special meeting was to be held, in keeping with the announcement at the preceding session, for the advancement of Brothers Gourgass and Escot. The minutes then record that as there was no objection, the two Entered Apprentices would have their salaries increased according to the award. Continuing, the record states that they made the required voyages, responded with candor and modesty to the essential questions, and revealed their Masonic knowledge thereby. Thereupon the Venerable Master had them approach the throne (East), where they were given the customary lecture and invested with the words, signs and grips of the degree. Lodge was then opened on the Third Degree and the two Fellowcrafts raised to the grade of Master Mason. The signature of Escot appears at the end of the minutes, while that of Gourgass appears twice in the body of the record, each time in the margin opposite the secretary's record of his advancement and raising.

The account books of the Lodge show that Gourgass was debited on June 9 with \$4.00 for his Fellowcraft Degree and

with \$6.00 for that of Master Mason, as well as \$2.25 to cover the cost of being advanced at a special communication. He was credited with like amounts on June 13.

Gourgas requested a demit from the Lodge at the meeting held May 16, 1808,⁽⁷⁾ when he paid his dues to date, a total of \$5.50. Being clear on the books, the request was granted. As we study the records from May 26, 1806, to May 16, 1808—which are contained within the only book of minutes accessible for investigation of Gourgas' record—it is seen that he attended at least seventeen meetings. His very close friend and Masonic Brother, J. G. Tardy, who had been Master of the Lodge 1800, 1801, 1802 and 1805, was again elected to that office December 15, 1806, to serve for the ensuing year, and Gourgas was chosen “Garde des Sceaux Timbre et Archives”—Custodian of the Seals and Records. On April 7, 1807, he was appointed to a committee of three to visit Bro. Gentil, who had been reported ill. Considerate of his responsibilities, Gourgas reported, on May 18, 1807, that he would be absent for some months, and Bro. Dubois was appointed Custodian.

The years went on, and Gourgas achieved high honors in other fields. Yet his mother lodge did not lose sight of him, and in his closing years his brethren thought of him. Being nominated for honorary membership on his eighty-seventh birthday anniversary, the proposal was eloquently supported by his friend, Past Grand Master John W. Simons—who had been Master of the Lodge L'Union Française in 1862—and the formal election took place June 13, 1864. Gourgas' letter of acceptance reveals the encroachment of the years, yet the familiar strokes so characteristic of his penmanship may yet be recognized, though the hand that made them was greatly enfeebled. With the letter he sent a photograph, one more recent than the lithographic reproduction presented on a previous occasion.

The records examined for data on J. J. J. Gourgas also reveal the affiliation of an older brother, Johanne Gourgas, on June 15, 1807. (He was the one mistaken for J. J. J. Gourgas

when the year 1807 was erroneously assigned as the date of his advancement.) He served on a committee to thank "our sisters" who aided in a celebration of the Feast of St. John held June 24. The death of Johanne is reported in a communication received from the Lodge La Candeur No. 12 of Charleston, South Carolina, on October 19. On November 2, 1807, it was voted to hold a lodge of sorrow, the date and place being left to the choice of the Master. On June 12, 1810, Past Master J. G. Tardy reminded the Lodge of the death of several brethren, including Johanne Gourgass, and proposed a lodge of sorrow, which was held in keeping with the solemn formalities of the Fraternity on November 27, 1810, to which J. J. J. Gourgass was invited.

ADMISSION TO THE HIGH GRADES

On July 29, 1806, Gourgass attained still further light in Masonry by being admitted to the Sovereign Chapter of Rose Croix d'H-R-D-M of Kilwinning at New York City. John Gabriel Tardy was the President of the body, and Gourgass served it as Secretary. Just what particular Rosierucian degree this body worked is not definitely known, as several Masonic Rosierucian degrees are of record, worked in various rites and systems.⁽⁸⁾ Some were not necessarily predicated on previous Craft degrees.

At the time these events were taking place, Ill. Antoine Bideaud, 33°, one of the original nine who composed the Supreme Council of the French West Indian Islands under Alexandre François Auguste de Grasse Tilly in 1802, appeared in New York City, and operating outside of his territory, conferred the degree of Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, 32°, upon Tardy, Gourgass, Jean Baptiste Desdoity, Louis Des Saulles and Peter Adrian Du Peyrat. This was done August 4, 1806. Two days later a Sublime Grand Consistory was established, of which Tardy was designated the presiding officer and Gourgass named Secretary.⁽⁹⁾



THE GOURGAS ARMORIAL BOOKPLATE

Three types of the Gourgas family bookplate are known. The oldest is that of Jean Louis Gourgas, copies of it being found in old books inherited by the present representative of the family. As it is identical in all respects with that of J. J. J. Gourgas, except for the deletion of "Jean Louis" and the substitution of the three Latin initials, it is evident that the later Gourgas converted the original copperplate to his own use. The older brother, John Mark, used the family coat of arms, improving the design and adding the motto, *Deo omnia plena*.

The J. J. J. Gourgas design first appeared on a white laid paper. In later years a blue wove paper was used. Specimens of both varieties are to be found in the Gourgas books in the Library of the Supreme Council. The plate is described as No. 316 in Allen's *American Bookplates*.

Two years later, on November 26, 1808, Gourgass received the degrees of Select Masons of Twenty-seven and the Dublin Royal Arch from a peripatetic vender of degrees, Abraham Jacobs, who up to November 8 of that year had been only a Knight of the Sun, 23°, of the Rite of Perfection. He (Jacobs) received the Thirty-second Degree on November 8, 1808, from Tardy.

ELEVATION TO THE THIRTY-THIRD DEGREE

Reviewing the facts, it is seen that Gourgass made rapid progress in Freemasonry, having gone from Entered Apprentice in 1806 to Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret, 32°, in the same year. His next advance took place on the date of which we this year (1938) celebrate the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary namely, August 5, 1813, when Ill. Emanuel De La Motta, Grand Treasurer General of the Mother Supreme Council at Charleston, South Carolina, elevated him to the rank and dignity of Sovereign Grand Inspector General, 33°. On the same day the Grand and Supreme Council of the Most Puissant Sovereigns, Grand Inspectors General of the Thirty-third Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for the Northern District and Jurisdiction of the United States of America, came into being, and Gourgass took his post as its first Grand Secretary General, holding it until 1832, when he automatically became the Most Puissant Sovereign Grand Commander. This office he held until August 25, 1851, when he relinquished it in favor of his intimate friend, associate and protégé, Giles Fonda Yates, 33°, who had been Lieutenant Grand Commander since 1843.

It must not be believed for a moment, however, that Gourgass stepped out of the picture entirely in 1851. Though he had then attained the venerable age of 74, he continued an interest in the Scottish Rite until his death fourteen years later. Letters in the Supreme Council Archives, exchanged between Gourgass and Grand Commander Edward Asa Raymond in 1853 and 1854, indicate that the latter called upon

Gourgas for advice at times, and revealed by his respectful language that he had a sincere regard for Gourgas' ability to give sound counsel upon perplexing questions.

THE MASONIC ACTIVITIES OF GOURGAS, 1806-1832

With the bare outlines of Gourgas' Masonic affiliations thus sketched, the first epoch of his labors for the Scottish Rite may be presented. We have no record of any activity on his part in Symbolic Masonry. In fact, it is extremely likely, as has been said by opponents of Gourgas, that he ceased being a member in good standing of the Symbolic Rite—or "York" Rite, to use a misnomer. Today such a situation would be an impossible one; but at the time under consideration, Ancient Craft Masonry of the Symbolic Rite was not so strongly established as it is now, and Grand Lodges had not yet arrogated to themselves the right, undenied today, to define what Freemasonry is, and just how far other organizations purporting to be Masonic are permitted to go. Now we assume that all Freemasonry practiced in the United States is either predicated upon the basic three degrees, or is regular only when recognized as such by the Grand Lodges in their respective jurisdictions. In cases where definite recognition is not specifically extended, a policy of toleration prevails; but it is tacitly understood that such toleration will continue only as long as the generally accepted Masonic proprieties prevail. This was distinctly *not* the situation in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The various Masonic rites practiced in the United States were not necessarily based upon good standing in the basic three degrees, and in systems which had the basic three degrees of their own—such as the Rite of Perfection, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the French Rite, and others which might be named, though not necessarily worked in the United States at the time—a brother might be dropped from the rolls of the system in which he was brought to light, and yet be permitted to visit its bodies by virtue of his standing in another system. It was not until after the re-

vitalization of Freemasonry, following the anti-Masonic excitement of 1826-1840, that many of the methods prevailing today were inaugurated. A much later example of surcease of Craft membership, and the retention of good standing in the Scottish Rite, may be seen in the case of Edward Asa Raymond, Grand Commander, 1851-1860, who demitted from Ancient Craft Masonry in 1853 and thereafter remained an unaffiliate, in spite of the fact that he had been Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts in 1848, 1849 and 1850, and held other supreme offices in the Capitular, Cryptic and Chivalric Rites of Massachusetts. Therefore, the student of early American Freemasonry must keep in mind conditions as they were then, rather than attempt judgment by standards which prevail today. The Scottish Rite has definitely relinquished its control of the Symbolic degrees wherever a regular and legitimate Grand Lodge controls them.⁽¹⁰⁾

Opportunity is here offered to emphasize an attitude which Gourgas took until the day of his death, namely, that the High Grades were not to be cheapened by too great a popularity. It is a telling reply to those who assert that the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction was a "paper" organization, as distinguished from other Masonic groups which apparently were active and zealous in the propagation of their degrees. The Supreme Council has in its possession a manuscript declaration by Gourgas on this subject, and while it was written at a later date, it nevertheless indicates the ultra-conservative attitude of Gourgas and his associates from the earliest days:

For the present, at least, I think we had better beware of publicity, so as to avoid all inimical jealousy. But at the same time let ourselves on every fair opportunity be well known for what we really are, and have always been—true, good, legal and constitutional and above all reproaches. Admit none but the truly moral, tried lovers of Masonry, well informed, and worthy in every point of view. Follow all this, and you surely will be respected, loved and ultimately succeed to the greatest good of our Illustrious Order.

The Symbolic Grand Lodges in the United States, if wise, ought to follow in the footsteps of the Grand Symbolic Lodge of England and be-

ware that with all their foreign intercourse and corresponding they do not become sooner or later Frenchified, &c.

As to us of the Sublime Degrees, we ought to watch, and are bound so to do, so that finally our degrees are not entirely runaway with and disfigured from their original intent, &c.

GOURGAS AND THE CONSISTORY OF SUBLIME PRINCES,
1806-1813

The Sublime Grand Consistory organized by Bideaud in 1806, and reorganized in 1808, left no records to posterity. A manuscript account, written by Gourgass in 1846, gives us the meager details of the organization of the Grand Consistory, which was "acknowledged, approved and confirmed" by Emanuel De La Motta in 1813. In addition to the six founders—Bideaud, Tardy, Gourgass, Desdoity, Des Saulles and De Peyrat—there are listed Daniel D. Tompkins, Sampson Simson, Richard Riker, Moses Levi Maduro Peixotto and Peter Le Barbier Duplessis, Deputy Inspector General, all recognized in their respective capacities by De La Motta and the Supreme Council at Charleston. An advertisement in the *New York Mercantile Advertiser* of March 10, 1809, announced "that for some time past, a Sublime Consistory of S. P. of the R. S. has been duly and legally established at this Grand East," and the names of Tardy, Desdoity, Riker, Gourgass, Peixotto, Simson, Mordecai Myers and Abraham Jacobs appear.

CHAPTER IV

GOURGAS AS GRAND SECRETARY GENERAL, 1813-1832

Soon after Gourgass received his degrees, one Joseph Cerneau arrived in New York in 1806, and by virtue of a *Rite of Perfection* authority, established a *Sovereign Grand Consistory* in 1807. The following year Aurora Grata Lodge of Perfection and Concordia Crescimus Council of Princes of Jerusalem (16°) were established in New York, both of these being regular bodies under the Rite of Perfection Grand Constitutions of 1762.

THE HIGH GRADES IN NEW YORK IN 1813

The above mentioned bodies and the Bideaud Sublime Grand Consistory, 32°, which was founded in 1806, formed the quaternary representing the high grades when Emanuel De La Motta, 33°, Treasurer General of the Supreme Council at Charleston, arrived in New York in 1813. He had gone to the North to recover his health in a more favorable climate, where he came upon a Masonic situation about which both he and his Supreme Council associates at Charleston knew nothing. His investigations ultimately prompted the determination to recognize the Bideaud body, and the two others, Aurora Grata and Concordia Crescimus, which had been formed by Abraham Jacobs. He received no information whatever from the Cerneau Sovereign Grand Consistory when he interviewed its leaders. He thereupon decided to legalize the Bideaud and Jacobs bodies, which had placed all records at his disposal for examination, and to establish the Second Supreme Council in

22

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF LONDON

The City of London is one of the most ancient and famous cities in the world. It was founded by the Romans, and has since that time been the seat of government and commerce. The city is situated on the banks of the River Thames, and is surrounded by a wall. The city is divided into four wards, and each ward is governed by a wardens and commonalty. The city is also divided into parishes, and each parish is governed by a parish council. The city is the largest and most populous city in England, and is the centre of the British Empire. The city is famous for its many historical landmarks, including St. Paul's Cathedral, the Tower of London, and the Houses of Parliament. The city is also famous for its many famous residents, including William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Winston Churchill.

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the United States, as authorized by Article V of the Grand Constitutions of 1786.

THE BIRTH OF THE NORTHERN SUPREME COUNCIL, 1813

On August 5, 1813, as a result of all the foregoing circumstances, there came into being "The Grand and Supreme Council of the Most Puissant Sovereigns, Grand Inspectors General of the Thirty-third Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for the Northern District and Jurisdiction of the United States of America." Daniel D. Tompkins was named Sovereign Grand Commander and Gourgas as Grand Secretary General of the Holy Empire.

OTHER MASONIC LABORS OF GOURGAS

Though no official records appear to have survived, it is known from other sources that Gourgas was actively engaged in Masonic labors from 1806 to the end of the period under consideration. He corresponded extensively with other French Masons. Among the earliest Gourgas letters in the Supreme Council Archives is one from Bro. A. Cart, of the Lodge Les Amis Choisis (Chosen Friends) of Demerary, British Guiana. Writing in French, he mentions the praises bestowed upon Gourgas by his friend Des Saulles, Mrs. Des Saulles and son John, and continues: "If the country were mountainous, rather than flat and aquatic, the echoes would continually repeat the name of Gourgas." Surely a testimonial to the closely knit ties between Gourgas and his New York friends! The letter also indicates that Gourgas was actively engaged in furthering Masonic affairs by correspondence with authorities in France. Des Saulles, writing in 1811, informed Gourgas that he had left instructions in his will to have his Masonic jewels and documents transmitted to Gourgas and Tardy, to be held in trust until his son Louis had attained the requisite age to become a Mason. These letters portray not only Masonic activities, but also the confidence and trust which others had in Gourgas. Letters as early as 1807, from Paris, reveal a

search for rituals of the Twenty-third to Twenty-sixth Degrees, which formed the subject of many letters by others later. In April, 1813, the "Secret Constitutions" of 1761 were sent by Gourgass to a Philadelphia correspondent, A. J. Blocquerst. He was indefatigable in his search for and acquisition of manuscript rituals of all sorts, writing to Paris, Dublin and various places in the West Indies for material. One of his letters of 1808, to Martinique, had a narrow escape. The ship carrying the missive was overtaken, apparently by a British vessel, and the mail was put into a sack at the end of a rope and thrown into the sea, being hauled back on board after the ship had been permitted to proceed. The recipient dried it carefully and was able to read it. These sidelights reveal the difficulties under which our brethren of early days labored. Letters and documents were often entrusted to individuals traveling abroad, rather than to the very uncertain and unsafe mails.

The paucity of records has often been seized upon as evidence that there were no activities on Gourgass' part until well into the forties. The letters cited, and others which are extremely numerous between 1822 and 1832, prove Gourgass' Masonic zeal, while at the same time supporting his position that the degrees were not to be cheapened by being peddled promiscuously. The mushroom growth of the Cerneau bodies, and their ultimate collapse under the Hicks and St. Laurent regimes, confirm the wisdom of Gourgass' attitude.

GOURGAS AS GRAND SECRETARY GENERAL

With the establishment of the Northern Supreme Council in 1813, a new epoch was entered upon by Gourgass and his associates. The absorption of the Jacobs bodies into the Scottish Rite system enabled the newly established Rite to operate in a highly selective manner. No other bodies were established, but in 1820-21 Albany Lodge of Perfection, originally founded in 1767, was revived under the old Rite of Perfection regulations, and it, together with some other bodies related to it,

came under the Supreme Council at New York in 1828. This followed after Gourgass had learned, to his amazement, that the Charleston Supreme Council had elevated brethren to the Thirty-third Degree and authorized the formation of bodies within the jurisdiction of the Northern Supreme Council. However, it should be said in extenuation of the circumstances, that the acts were committed by Grand Commander Moses Holbrook, M.D., after his elevation to office. He had no personal knowledge of the events of 1813-14 by De La Motta, nor were there any records to consult, as extensive conflagrations in Charleston, especially one in 1819, had destroyed the early archives of his Supreme Council. When the facts were called to his attention, the irregularities were promptly and most amicably adjusted. A lively correspondence was commenced between Gourgass and Holbrook, which ran from 1826 to 1832, and it is from their letters—as well as those from Giles Fonda Yates, 33°—that we are able to reconstruct in great detail the history of the Scottish Rite in the United States during this period. The researches of Ill. Samuel Harrison Baynard, Jr., 33°, Deputy for Delaware, in connection with his recently completed *History of the Supreme Council*, have brought to light long forgotten facts bearing upon the Rite in New York and New England of this period. They are presented in detail in his volumes.

GOURGAS AND HOLBROOK

As Ill. Bro. Baynard proves in his *History*, the correspondence between these two leaders of Scottish Rite Freemasonry “refutes the belief that the Southern and the Northern Supreme Councils were entirely inactive prior to 1843.” Not only is this the case, but the correspondence also reveals how heavily the Southern Jurisdiction leaned upon its sturdy offspring. The anti-Masonic excitement of 1826-1840 wreaked havoc with Freemasonry in the United States; the cholera epidemic of 1832 contributed its part toward halting social and economic affairs; and the financial crash of 1837 put an

effective stop to anything that savored of a revival of old customs. It was not until the forties that the crushed Masonic life of the two previous decades could be resumed, and new and sturdier foundations laid in every endeavor of human activity. These things must be borne in mind as we follow Gourgas and his associates during their trying years.

Difficulties with Cerneau elements in Charleston *circa* 1823, brought active members of the Charleston Supreme Council into the picture. Dr. Holbrook, as Lieutenant Grand Commander, opened correspondence with Gourgas early in 1826 (he became Grand Commander October 27, 1826). Years later, in writing to Yates, Gourgas graphically described the existing situation in these words:

You know too well how much and how sincerely I have labored and always fighting against numerous odds of difficulties—lugging at one time both Supreme Councils, here and Charleston, on my own individual shoulders, for in those days Dalcho (sluggish, indifferent, and pride in being Grand Chaplain) had got tired and Holbrook who had then, 1822-24, just been admitted knew nothing, was perfectly raw.

The loss of rituals and documents at Charleston induced Holbrook to seek aid from Gourgas. He wrote as follows:

We had our papers nearly consumed by fire three times within the last 40 years. Many of them were burnt in 1819—mostly records, letters, returns, curtains, &c., &c. . . . Could we in any way purchase a “big Tuilleur”? . . . I should be pleased to possess a list of the names of the Supreme Council for France and of their officers.

Other letters of similar import could be quoted, showing how Holbrook relied upon Gourgas for essential information and advice. Gourgas not only furnished Holbrook with the texts of all the rituals that were known at the time, but he drew upon his own large collection, gathered from many sources. He also furnished the Southern Supreme Council with transcripts of the Grand Constitutions and the Secret Constitutions. These were not only neatly copied by Gourgas personally, but were attractively bound in a red leather volume, and presented to Holbrook. This book has disappeared during the flight of years, a loss attributable to the indifference and neg-

lect of later officials who were as apathetic as some of their predecessors. Albert Pike years later recognized the essence of the situation when he said, "The chief obstacles to her [Masonry's] success are the apathy and faithlessness of her own children." Pike, who, with Albert Gallatin Mackey as Grand Secretary, restored the Temple of Scottish Rite Freemasonry in the Southern Jurisdiction, fully appreciated the fine work accomplished by Gourgas in the Northern Jurisdiction. This is shown by his reproducing, in full, all of the correspondence that passed between Holbrook and Gourgas, one side of which he obtained by borrowing the Holbrook correspondence from the Northern Jurisdiction.⁽¹¹⁾ Though Pike questioned some of the acts that took place during 1860-67 in the several Supreme Councils of the Northern Jurisdiction, he had no reason whatsoever to minimize anything that Gourgas had done when he was Grand Commander. The unbiased student of Masonic history must admit the volume, quality and efficacy of Gourgas' labors in preserving the Scottish Rite to English-speaking Freemasonry, regardless of what might have developed through a recrudescence of the Rite by propagation from France. From what we have seen in Europe in recent years, we are all the more convinced that true Freemasonry is an Anglo-Saxon institution, and that its genius can be fully appreciated and perpetuated only by those who understand and think the philosophy inherent in the Anglo-Saxon mind.

The correspondence of Gourgas with Holbrook reveals the man. In it we perceive his Continental background, and also that he had absorbed the spirit of America. His basic traits of character are expressed not only in his utterances, but in the very act of recording them on paper. The even and meticulous strokes of his pen are enlivened by the fires surging in his heart—yet nothing is done in a shoddy or hasty manner; everything reflects the workings of a well trained and ordered mind. It was indeed fortunate for Scottish Rite Freemasonry that a man with his careful habits was in the Grand Secretariat from 1813 to 1832. He it was who gathered and preserved

documents which became invaluable when those at Charleston disappeared. In no way minimizing the contributions made by the Founders at Charleston, and by those who succeeded them as the years went on, nevertheless it cannot be gainsaid that Gourgas was as important to the Northern Jurisdiction as Albert Pike was to the Southern. Each in his own way—for both wrought in distinctly different fields—made contributions of an undying nature to the Rite which was dearer to them than anything else which touched their Masonic labors.

CHAPTER V

GOURGAS AS GRAND COMMANDER, 1832-1851

It is rather striking that the spread of Cerneauism from 1826 to 1832 should have taken place at the very time that the Anti-Masonic excitement was gaining strength in the United States. A survey of Cerneau history shows that its growth in this country, aside from its foothold in New York, came at the very time that the Northern Supreme Council was instituted by De La Motta. The Cerneaus planted bodies in New Orleans in 1813, among the French; later in Newport, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Norfolk and Charleston; and after 1823 in the West Indies and South America. Boston came into the picture in 1825, through the Charleston Supreme Council which had issued charters to several New Englanders for a Council of Princes of Jerusalem and a Consistory. However, these charters were not used at the time (that for the Consistory was never utilized) and it was not until 1842 that a Council of Princes was established in Boston, and then under the Northern Jurisdiction. Anti-Masonic developments brought a halt to Freemasonry in the North in 1826, just when the Cerneau forces and the Gourgass body were preparing to start anew. Gourgass ceased all efforts for propagation of the Rite, other than to strengthen his own position; the Cerneaus continued their work in regions where the anti-Masonic storm had no effect, which were the states south of the Mason and Dixon line. (The bodies established in the West Indies and South America had no vitality, and disappeared completely.)

Political and religious agitation forced many to flee their Masonic lodges by 1832, which was the crest of the wave in the

seaboard states; the excitement reached its height in Western New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio by 1836. The active members of the Northern Supreme Council ceased all effort, and by 1832 Gourgas was seemingly the only interested survivor.

GOURGAS AND YATES

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Men reveal themselves in many ways, but it is in their correspondence that some of their innermost traits, often very successfully concealed from their associates, come to the surface in an unmistakable manner. History presents many examples of beautiful friendships, but in Freemasonry none withstood all trials and tribulations so effectively as that which existed between Gourgas and Giles Fonda Yates.⁽¹²⁾ To read the letters they exchanged with each other, realizing that here we have confidences intended for no other eye, brings a feeling of embarrassment to the biographer who must penetrate the sanctuaries of their hearts. Gourgas was old enough to be the father of Yates; Yates gives an almost filial affection and devotion to his Masonic mentor and chief. As the years go on, and Gourgas nears three score and ten, he becomes irritable. When he relinquished his Grand Commandership in 1851, though retaining a keen interest in the Masonic affairs of the hour, he is petulant and crabbed in his attitude. He scolds Yates like a father might scold a child, unjustly so, it must be admitted; but never does the latter reveal the annoyance and irritation he must have felt. Gourgas leaned more and more heavily upon his protégé, however, and only those who have walked with these two in the gardens at Weston during the days of 1851, can realize what a blow it was to Gourgas, now 82, when Yates died twelve days before Christmas, 1859. The staff upon which he had leaned since 1842 was ruthlessly taken from him, and Gourgas faced his few remaining years without the benefit of a true and tried Masonic friend.

Yates entered into Gourgas' circle in 1827, following the resumption of relationships with Charleston. Yates had been crowned a Sovereign Grand Inspector General, 33°, in 1825,

and admitted to membership in the Supreme Council at Charleston; but in 1828 he transferred his allegiance to the Northern Supreme Council and became an active member. During the somnolency of the Supreme Council from 1832 to 1844, Gourgas and Yates kept the small spark glowing, fanning it into an ever increasing flame as they enlarged the Supreme Council in 1844 and witnessed the beginning of the growth which has continued to this very day.

The early letters of Yates to Gourgas reveal the respect which the younger man had for the elder. This respect never diminished, but grew into a sacred friendship characterized by a reverence which tugs at one's heart strings. We perceive Gourgas, who is advancing in years, becoming frail of body, but whose Masonic fires burn unceasingly, threatening, praising and chiding Yates. On the other hand, Yates yields to Gourgas on many points in a magnanimous manner, yet couches his views on controversial matters so tactfully that Gourgas takes Yates' position without realizing that he has been most deftly handled. Yates becomes firmer as the years go by, but he never loses his respect, reverence and gentleness. Gourgas has no hesitation in speaking emphatically and in unmistakable terms about his opponents. He possesses a Gallic vigor which, in a less patrician individual, would break forth in most uncouth vituperation.

Yates never loses control—he is always the calm, benign and unruffled old bachelor to whom children go without the least hesitation, and in whom older people confide implicitly. He is a gentleman of the old school, a student of the Greek and Latin classics, whose secret ambition, expressed in a burst of soul to Gourgas, is to be an author. Some of his writings are preserved in the Masonic periodicals of his day.

It is into the control of these two remarkable brethren that the Scottish Rite passed when the dark days of 1832-1844 came upon the "Sublime Degrees," as they dearly loved to designate them. They had labored together from 1827 to 1832, and valiantly fought the Cerneau contenders. The fires of

Masonry were banked in 1832, and only at Albany was there any semblance of activity in the superior degrees. The feebly glowing fires were strong enough, however, to attract attention in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Boston, Massachusetts, in 1841.

DEVELOPMENTS OF 1842-1851

It was not long before Yates induced Gourgas to resume activity. However, this was not done until the Boston brethren, working under authority of a charter granted in 1825 by the Supreme Council at Charleston, opened a Council of Princes of Jerusalem in 1842. Boston Lodge of Perfection, 14°, was formed immediately, and the strength displayed here prompted Gourgas to concur in the recommendation that the Supreme Council become active by the admission of new members. There were then admitted Edward Asa Raymond, Reuel Baker and Charles Whitlock Moore of Boston, John Christie of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Killian H. Van Rensselaer and Archibald Bull of New York. Yates was named Lieutenant Grand Commander, and held that office until 1851, succeeding Gourgas as Grand Commander, but himself resigning soon after his elevation, to make way for Raymond.

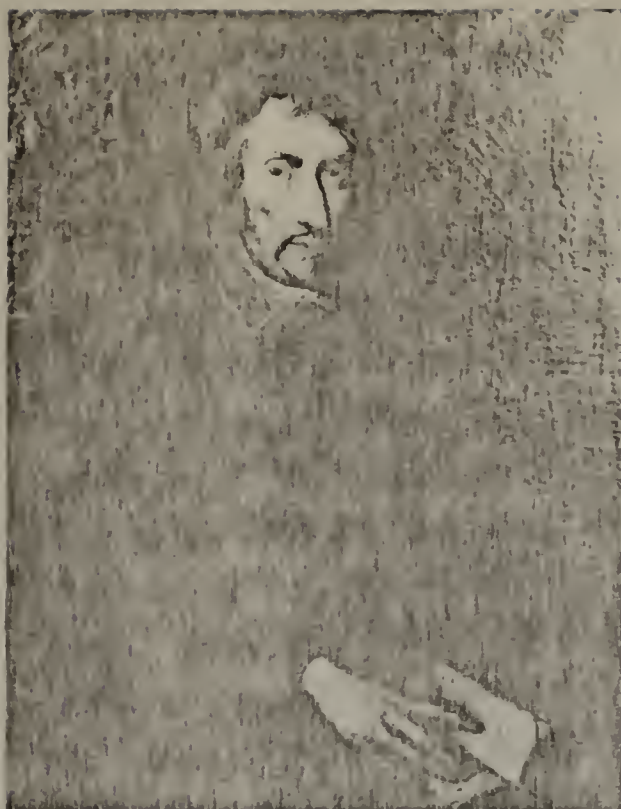
The period of 1842-1851 brought new trials and vexations to Gourgas. He had to rely entirely upon Yates for information, and as Yates was a lawyer by profession, specializing in pension claims, he was constantly traveling, and spent much time in Washington. Yet it was by means of these travels that he was able to contact Masonic leaders and brethren, and to begin the work of propagation which Killian Van Rensselaer carried on so effectively in the fifties. In fact, Van Rensselaer could well be termed the St. Paul of Scottish Rite Freemasonry, as he spread the Rite from the Connecticut to the Mississippi during his missionary labors of 1848-1863.

With the entrance of the Boston brethren into the picture, Gourgas had new factors to deal with. The seat of the Supreme Council was ultimately (1851) transferred from New York to

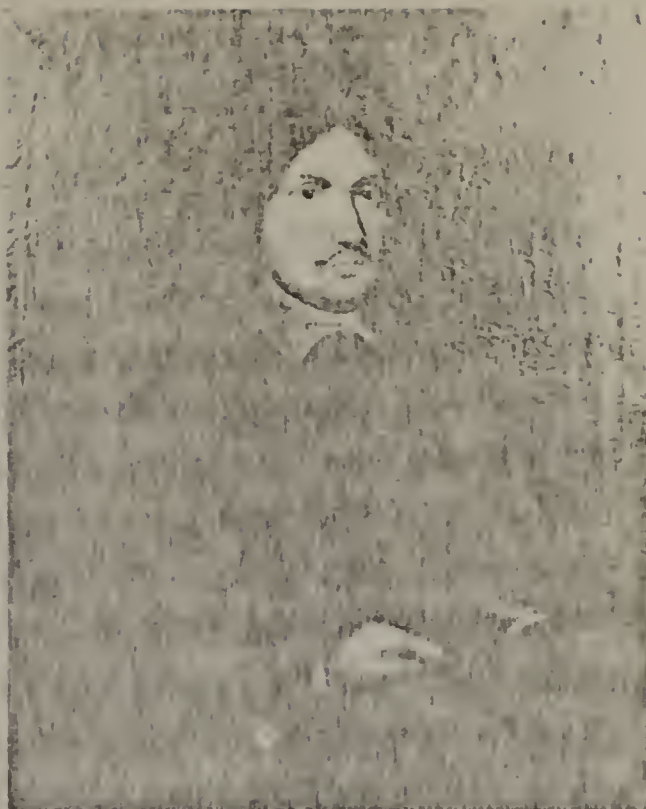
Boston, though Charles W. Moore, who was also Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, had become the Grand Secretary General in 1845. Moore had other things to do besides looking after Scottish Rite affairs, and the exasperation and indignation of Gourgass toward Moore for seeming indifference and neglect brought many a caustic expression from Gourgass in his outbursts to Yates. From the vantage point of later years, and knowing from other examples in Moore's Masonic life how politely exasperating this cultured New Englander of British parentage could be, we can sympathize with Gourgass. At the same time, keeping in mind the New England factors which wielded no mean influence upon American Masonic affairs of the time in Symbolic, Capitular and Chivalric circles, it is also apparent that the medieval and autocratic features of a Masonic philosophy not indigenous to American soil were out of keeping with Anglo-Saxon ideals of democracy, such as found expression in New England during a then comparatively recent period. The decade of 1840-50 was one which represented the taking of a new inventory following the Jackson régime; and with ever widening frontiers—which leaped the Missouri and the Rockies to the Pacific following the Mexican War of 1846-48—Freemasonry was also in the vanguard of the new phase of pioneer development and partook of the spirit of the times. Gourgass belonged to an era which had died out, though he knew it not, and it was inevitable that he yield the reins to younger hands. From 1825 to 1865—a span of time reminiscent of Moses leading the children of Israel over the desert—Gourgass was in the Scottish Rite picture; and strangely enough, like Moses, he was given a glimpse of the Promised Land but was not himself permitted to enter.

RESIGNATION AS GRAND COMMANDER, 1851

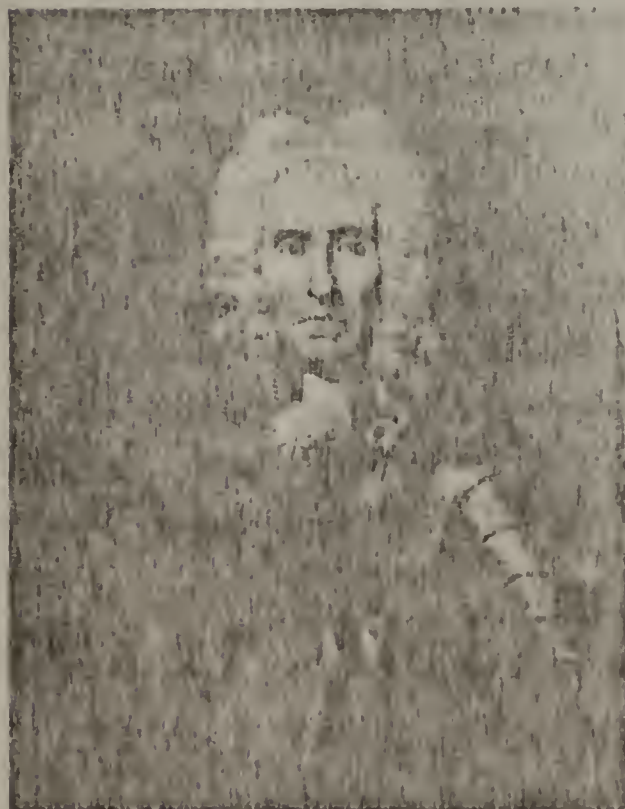
Gourgass resigned his office as Grand Commander August 24, 1851, relinquishing the responsibilities to Yates. He held the post until September 5, 1851, when the Supreme Council met in Boston, and he tendered his resignation.



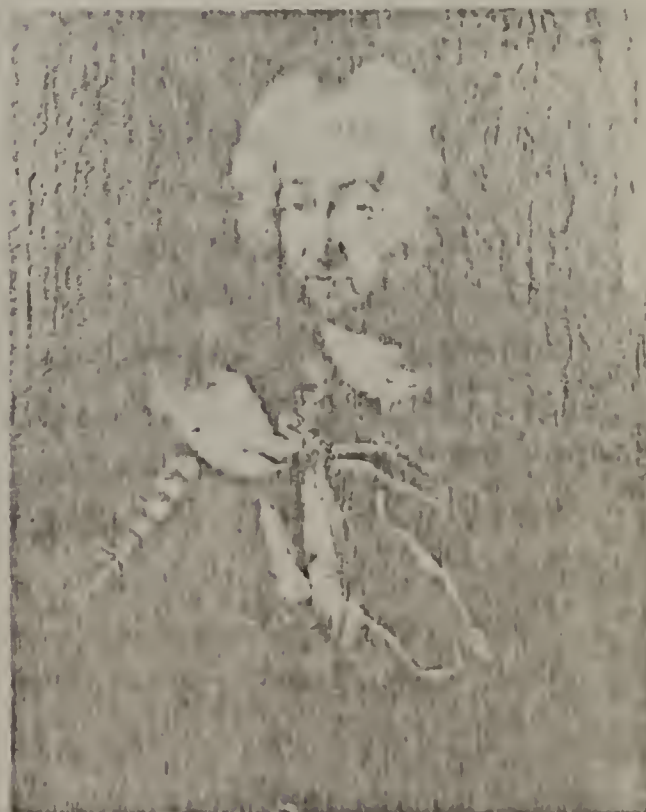
REV. PAUL DURANT
? - 1661 (?)
Minister of the Reformed Church
at Gallargues



REV. HENRY DURANT
? - 1725
Son of Rev. Paul Durant



LIEUT. COL. CHARLES LOUIS DURANT
? - 1746
Son of Rev. Paul Durant



VICTOR AMADEUS II
1662-1732
King of Sardinia

RETROSPECTION

As we look back upon this period—1842-1851—it can be seen that it followed a decade when Gourgas carried the Supreme Council on his own shoulders, with no associates other than Yates. A keen interest in Freemasonry, and the desire to have it grow unimpaired, induced Gourgas to add new and younger men to the Council, and to express through it the powers which the Grand Constitutions gave the governing body. Gourgas was also fearful of the encroachments of the “American Rite,” as he termed the lusty development consisting of Symbolic, Capitular and Chivalric Masonry; but he was also enough of a Masonic statesman to see that if the Rite was to grow, it would have to have the good will of the leaders in other branches. These were accordingly approached and taken into the Rite. The strongly prevailing Christian attitude was encouraged by restricting the degrees above the Sixteenth to Christians only—a feature which is still a requirement in the Supreme Council of England, which was organized in 1845 by authority from the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction.

The foundations of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction were strengthened and deepened by Gourgas and Yates from 1842 to 1851. They also laid the ground floor over which Raymond and his associates erected the superstructure in the decade that followed. The incidents of that period are not high points in the life of Gourgas. We may well omit details until 1860, when new clouds gathered upon the horizon and Gourgas was once more called upon for wise counsel.

CHAPTER VI

THE EVENTS OF 1860-1867

The rival organization to which Gourgass alluded so feelingly had prospered under the leadership of the militant and irresistible Atwood. Its story is not germane to the present account; those who seek the facts will find them in the Baynard *History*. Atwood died in 1860, and was succeeded by Edmund Burke Hays, who came upon the scene when trouble and dissension were rising in the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction of our obedience.

Edward Asa Raymond, who followed Yates as Grand Commander in 1851, openly revealed the determined temperament and the iron hand which he had held in abeyance when in a subordinate capacity, though he had influenced affairs from behind the scenes in Boston during the late forties. Although the Rite prospered and spread during his régime, largely because of the efforts of Killian H. Van Rensselaer, Raymond himself became arrogant and self-willed, and at the annual session in May, 1860, failed to appear for the opening session. Raymond was called upon at his home, whereupon he promised to attend the next day and preside. He failed to do so; the meeting was closed and the members departed for their homes. On July 31, 1860, he called a special meeting to be held in Boston August 22d, at which he permitted the dispatch of routine business. On the next day, Thursday, he asserted his right as Grand Commander to close and open the Council at whatever time he pleased, and declared the meeting adjourned until Friday morning at ten. Assembling that morning, the Council listened to the minutes of the day before, and were startled to hear Raymond's declaration that the Council was

closed *sine die*. The Grand Commander and the Grand Treasurer General, Simon W. Robinson, left the room abruptly.

The events that followed are most graphically related by Ill. Bro. Baynard in his *History*:

The remaining six of those who were present at the meeting, stunned for the moment at the enormity of that which the Grand Commander had done, conferred among themselves as to the proper course for them to pursue. Realizing that much of the business that had been regularly brought before the Council was unfinished; that there was yet present a regular quorum for the transaction of business, they continued the session and Ill. Brother Van Rensselaer was unanimously requested to preside. Upon being informed that past M. P. Sovereign Grand Commander Gourgas was residing in a neighboring town, a committee, consisting of Ill. Brothers Van Rensselaer, Christie and Starkweather, was named to wait upon the Ill. Brother, tell him the facts and ask his advice as to how to proceed. Adjournment was then taken until Saturday morning.

They met at nine, Saturday morning, and the committee having interviewed Past Sovereign Grand Commander Gourgas, reported that he had advised that the Inspectors would be justified in placing one of their own number in the chair and proceeded with the regular business of the Council. Acting upon this wise counsel of the one man upon whose shoulders for nearly forty years had rested the destiny of this Supreme Council, whose mind had plotted the course and whose hand controlling the helm had saved it from the rocks at least three times before, they went to work with a determination that Gourgas' work, and that which they themselves have done, should not have been done in vain.

Raymond had seen fit to cross the Rubicon and they met the issue. The Supreme Council for the Northern Jurisdiction must live through this extremity, the task was theirs, and manfully they accepted it.

Gourgas' own opinion was expressed in these words:

I approve of your ejecting and deposing your Grand Commander, after his having treated you all in so unconstitutional, unamiable, and unbrotherly a manner, for which treatment no excuse can be given. Chance having invested in him a little power, he took upon himself to act the part of a petty tyrant, thereby exhibiting his ignorance and natural propensity. The only thing I cannot approve of is whatever is not conformable to the Grand Constitutions, which we have been obligated faithfully to obey. I am in hopes that so soon as you are properly righted, you will establish and follow the same rigidly, and nothing else.

With the above mentioned startling event, we apparently have the last direct participation of Gourgas in the affairs of the Supreme Council. To complete the story, let it be said that the stunned brethren carried on under the leadership of Van Rensselaer. Raymond and his adherents joined hands with the Cerneau Supreme Council under Hays in 1863. This left two Scottish Rite Supreme Councils in the Northern field—the Hays-Raymond, which continued as a Cerneau body, and the Van Rensselaer, which continued as the organization created by De La Motta in 1813. The Hays-Raymond body went into a decline; but in 1866 some of the former Raymond Council members resuscitated it, and by mutual consent of all the active members in the Hays-Raymond, the Van Rensselaer and the “revived” Raymond Supreme Councils, a union of all elements took place in 1867, when the present Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction was born.

Here we may well leave the story.

THE DEATH OF GOURGAS, 1865

It is readily seen that the events of 1860 and 1863 must have distressed Gourgas beyond expression. Though he was consulted at times, and visited by Van Rensselaer, his declining days were those of a Masonic recluse—a sorrowful fate indeed for one who had wrought as he had. He quitted mortality on February 14, 1865. It was only through a newspaper account, published in the *New York Saturday Courier*, that the fact of his death was announced to those who remembered him, and it was through this that his burial place was finally traced and discovered. His interment had taken place February 18, 1865, in the family plot located in New York Bay Cemetery, Jersey City, New Jersey.

SUMMARY

As we sum up the elements which were so mixed in the man, we find Gourgas a patrician at heart, a fact attributable

to a somewhat aristocratic ancestry. His Swiss forebears were people of ample means, as indicated by family records which have been preserved. His oldest brother, John Mark, whose account books were meticulously kept from early youth in London to old age on his estate at Weston, had amassed an excellent fortune which was somewhat impaired by losses during the tragic days of 1793-1797. Gourgas was but 20 then, but habits of thrift—so marked an attribute of the Continental European—were thoroughly ingrained. Association with his two older brothers, who were merchants on the Royal Exchange, trained our Gourgas in the intricacies of accounting and merchandising, and enabled him, upon beginning anew in America, to establish himself, rear a family and acquire a competency which insured a peaceful old age.

Though of patrician stock, Gourgas' nearness to the common people made him a champion of those principles of democracy and justice which found such active outlet in the Freemasonry of the eighteenth century. The respect for established authority, and the reverence paid to those who legitimately occupied the seats of government, enabled him to appreciate to the fullest extent the measure of obedience which should be accorded to them. This he insisted upon in his own circles as a representative of Masonic government, and at the same time he was ever in the front ranks himself, exerting the leadership which the high offices he held bestowed upon him. He was courageous and unflinching in any stand he took, but a native caution and shrewdness, developed by a strict business training, made him check his positions before launching into battle. Once committed to action, he never yielded and by sheer strength of character, supported by the knowledge that he was in the right, he attacked his opponents with keen vigor. He was not one to compromise in any position, or to yield gracefully to an inevitable situation. The fires which burned in the hearts of his Huguenot forebears, as they met the persecutions of the Roman Catholic Church in their native Languedoc, leaped anew in him when human rights and freedom of

conscience were endangered. Little wonder, then, that he was steeped heart and soul in the principles of Scottish Rite Freemasonry and preserved them during the dark hours when Anti-Masonry stalked through the land.

Originally of French descent, he nevertheless leaned heavily toward the Swiss ideal—an ideal which found expression in the formation of Switzerland as the first republic in the modern world. The source of this may be traced in the persecutions which his ancestors experienced at the hands of the ruling classes when the family were still humble folk in Languedoc. Their flight to Switzerland, and their warm reception there, endeared their adopted country to them, and it is not surprising that Gourgas imbibed the liberty loving spirit of the Swiss and opposed the priestly autocracy and shallow pretensions of the French. He bitterly decried their distortions of Freemasonry, which he designated “Frenchifying the degrees.” Much of this bitterness had its roots in the aid and comfort given to the Cerneau Rite by French Masonry, and was heightened by the deceit and chicanery with which his communications were met. His thoroughly ingrained distaste of the French was fanned into a flame again during the forties, when the English brethren, engaged in correspondence with him, were apparently carrying water on both shoulders by also maintaining relationships with the French exponents of the high degrees. It requires no stretch of the imagination to see this righteously indignant old man, of medium stature and frail build, express himself vigorously, vehemently and irascibly as he paced the floor and waved clenched fists to emphasize his remarks. Yet he was really a benign old man and kindly at heart, if we may properly evaluate the one portrait of him which has been preserved as a lithograph of *circa* 1851. (*See frontispiece.*)

We do not know if he was a member of any church. His religious creed has been preserved in one of his manuscript volumes. It is a combination of Christian liberalism and Freemasonry, such as we would expect from a Mason as ardent as

he was known to be. In his seventieth year—1847—he summed up his philosophy of life in these words, now copied from text written in his characteristic hand:

In spirit and in truth, I worship the Supreme Grand Architect of the Universe and Him only—I do not worship men or any man—their high worldly standing or their wealth. But I esteem, respect and love all just men, good and *true*, according to our *oldest* acknowledged standard. I have always acted scrupulously to the exact tenor of our Masonic obligations, old Landmarks and accepted Constitutions. Whenever my time comes—that I am no more for this world—I feel perfectly satisfied and happy to leave my reputation and memory to such impulses as a kind and merciful Province may suggest into the hearts of all righteous *ancient* Free and Accepted Masons. As to innovators of every die, but above all traitors to ancient Free and Accepted Masonry—I always did despise them most cordially. The above has always been my creed, in which I am willing and happy to die.

Thirteen decades and a half have passed since Gourgas reached our shores August 5, 1803, and a century and a quarter have recorded our history since that eventful day August 5, 1813, when the birth of the Supreme Council of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction took place. As we look down the endless corridor of the years, we review a panorama of significant events, and it requires no stretch of imagination to hear again the voices which were lifted in the councils of the Scottish Rite during trying times. Those of us who have labored in the silences of the night upon old and musty records recognize not only the voices as they are lifted in discussion, but we can also distinguish the brethren by their very footsteps as they come into our midst. Beginning with departed juniors most recently admitted to the fellowship of the governing body, whose ranks are increased as their forebears step forth again from the shadows, we see them march in review, falling back one by one to pay reverence and respect as the Founders come forward and again assume their positions at the head of the column. The greatest of them all is he whose zeal, labors, patience and unyielding persistence made possible the unsullied transmission of the Scottish Rite from the early days of the nineteenth century to those of the present. It is

most fitting, therefore, that we break the seals on the records of the past, and once more pay reverence and honor to the memory of

JOHN JAMES JOSEPH GOURGAS, S.:G.:I.:G.:., 33°
1777-1865

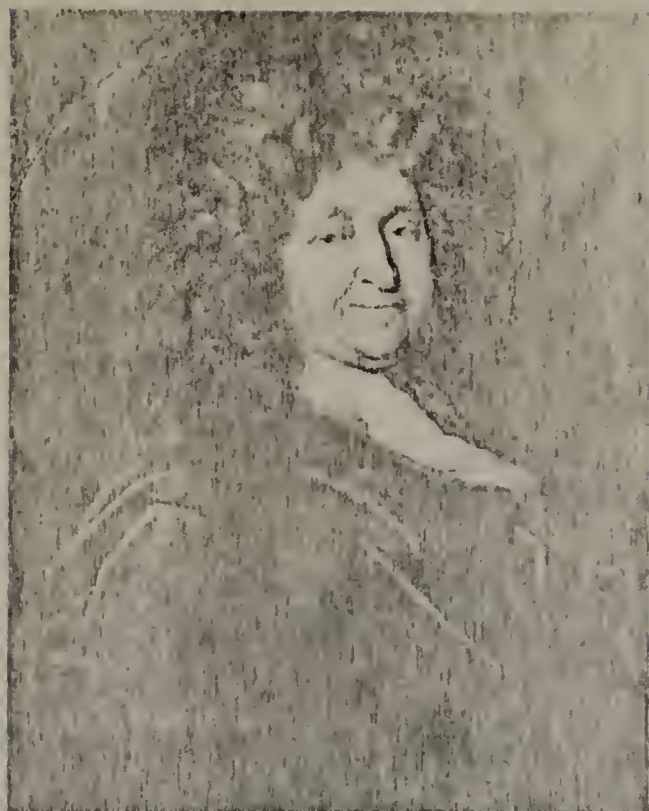
Conservator of Scottish Rite Freemasonry

Grand Secretary General, 1813-1832

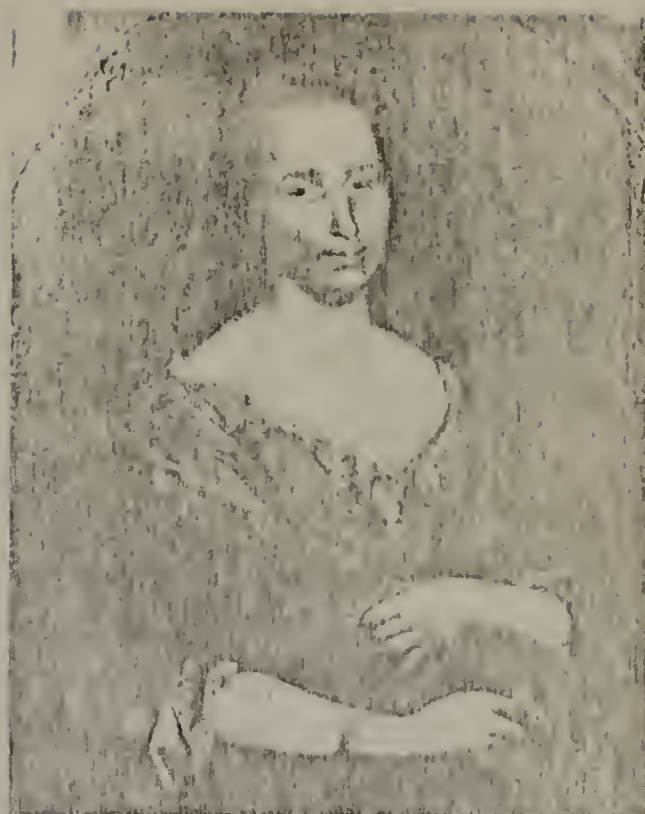
Sovereign Grand Commander, 1832-1851

Supreme Council of the 33°, A.:A.:S.:R.:., N.:M.:J.:.

Founded August 5, 1813

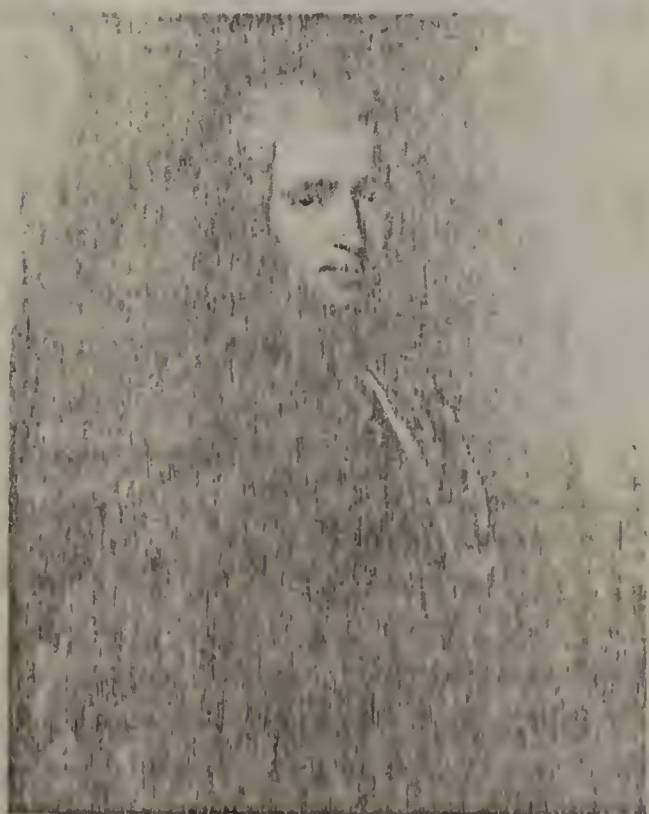


JEAN GOURGAS II
1631-1699



BERNARDINA DURANT GOURGAS
1661-1729

Great Grandfather and Great Grandmother of
John James Joseph Gourgas



JEAN LOUIS GOURGAS I
1699-1756



ANNE MARIE PERACHON GOURGAS
1709-1781

Grandfather and Grandmother of
John James Joseph Gourgas

CHAPTER VII

“DE MORTUIS NIL NISI BONUM”

“The evil that men do lives after them, the good is oft interrèd with their bones.” John James Joseph Gourgàs is an exception which proves the Shakespearian adage. Any evils which may have been committed by Gourgàs in his human frailties have long since passed from the knowledge of men. The good which he has done lives in the Rite which he fostered and developed during the trying times of the early nineteenth century. Of the Gourgàs long since gathered to his fathers, nothing but good can be said today.

CONTEMPORARY ESTIMATES OF GOURGAS

An undated manuscript (*circa* 1845, to judge from internal evidence), found among the Gourgàs-Yates papers in the Supreme Council Archives, contains the following account of the man. It is believed the statement was prepared for transmission to England in connection with the re-introduction of Scottish Rite Freemasonry into the British Isles. It had been introduced originally from France, about 1819; Irish developments followed a decade later.

As you appear to feel much interest in knowing what and who is our venerable M. P. Sov. Grand Commander, J. J. J. Gourgàs, I think you had better inquire at first source, the city of Geneva, Switzerland, when you will find that he belongs to the highest patrician family of that well known country—that having emigrated to London during the French revolution he and his two brothers were for nearly fifteen years well known and respected merchants in the Royal Exchange, that in 1803, disliking the political state of things and the then distracting European wars, they and families emigrated to this country from London with a

handsome competency and patrimony. - As to the silly story of his being a petty clark in a steamboat packet it probably was made out of his having been for a number of years concerned in the only Havre Packet Association. At present, however, and for many years past he has been entirely retired from any mercantile pursuits and family—if it may any ways interest you that all the branches of that family are generally well known, such esteemed and respected within these United States.

AN APPRAISAL BY ROB MORRIS

Rob Morris, a prolific Masonic writer, who subsequently became Grand Master of Masons in Kentucky, and is recognized as the founder of the Order of the Eastern Star as it is known today, published a picture of John James Joseph Gourgas in "The American Freemason," Louisville, Kentucky, issue of November 15, 1856, with the following comment:

Bro. J. J. Gourgas.—The labors of this venerable Brother are world-renowned in behalf of the "Ancient and Accepted Rite." He is probably the oldest living recipient of that Rite in America, and every one, who has enjoyed the rare privilege of listening to his lucid history of its introduction into, and progress upon this continent, will remember the fervor which the "old man eloquent" breathes into his subject. His collection of documentary facts, illustrating this peculiar branch of Masonry, is as unique as his memory, and it is to be desired they may fall into worthy hands.

Many of these records, documents and correspondence were placed in the archives of the Supreme Council by Gourgas before his death. His enemies had charged him with selling them to his brethren, but this is far from being the case. Some of his effects were scattered after his demise, but in 1871 Grand Commander Drummond reported the purchase of some remaining manuscripts and books from the family for two hundred dollars. Gourgas went to great pains and much expense to secure data during the early days of the Rite, and if he had been paid anything at all, the resources of the Supreme Council were such that proper recompense could not have been made. There is utterly no question as to Gourgas' altruistic attitude and his unselfish efforts for Freemasonry. Nothing

that he ever did for the Fraternity could be tinged by a charge of commercialism or self-interest.

TRIBUTES BY ALBERT GALLATIN MACKEY, 33°

Albert Gallatin Mackey, M.D., 33°, Masonic author and jurist, Secretary General of the Charleston Supreme Council from 1844 to his death in 1881, dedicated one of his books, *The Principles of Masonic Law* [New York, 1856], to Gourgas “as a slight testimonial of my friendship and esteem for him as a man, and of my profound Veneration for his character as a Mason; whose long and useful life has been well spent in the laborious prosecution of the science, and the unremitting conservation of the principles of our sublime institution.”

The various editions of Mackey's *An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Its Kindred Sciences* [first edition, 1873], contain sketches of him. Mackey declared that “Brother Gourgas was distinguished for the purity of his life and the powers of his intellect.” The Mackey article formed the basis of briefer sketches in *The Royal Cyclopedia of History, Rites, Symbolism, and Biography*, edited by Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie, IX°, and published in London by John Hogg, 1877, and in *Kenning's Masonic Cyclopedia and Handbook of Masonic Archaeology, History, and Biography*, edited by the Rev. A. F. A. Woodford, M.A., and published by George Kenning of London in 1878.

A TRIBUTE OF THE PRESS

The *New York Saturday Courier*, a few days after the death of Gourgas in 1865, carried a very extensive account of his passing. It read in part:

The departure to the world of spirits, of such a Brother as the subject of our notice, requires more than a passing remark, a tribute we feel called upon to pay, not only on account of his manly virtues, but for his great and varied Masonic attainments. There has probably been no Brother connected with Ineffable Masonry, who, from the commencement of the present century, filled a more exalted position than the lamented deceased. . . . This beloved and venerable Brother [was] ever found com-

bating on the side of Masonic truth and justice, and his efforts were rewarded in the one, as in the other, by the triumph of law and order, over anarchy and rebellion.

For many, many years our brother employed much of his time in collating matter of inestimable value to all Sublime Masons. His manuscripts and documents were not only voluminous, but gave the most conclusive evidence of the justice of the claims of the Supreme Council for the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction to legality, within its territorial jurisdiction. It is, indeed, a matter of congratulation that these inestimable treasures, were a few years since, by him, deposited in the Archives of the Body he loved so much, and served so faithfully and long; and will now that his spirit has taken its flight to that God who gave it, be valued the more highly.

Truly we may say, that a great and good man has fallen in our Israel. We, however, doubt not for a moment, that our loss is his eternal gain—that his spirit is now hovering over us in those blest mansions where sorrow is unknown, there awaiting the last trumpet which shall once more unite all good men and Masons. He had his trials, but—

“After life’s fitful fever, he sleeps well.”

NEW YORK GRAND LODGE OF PERFECTION

The minutes of the New York Grand Lodge of Perfection No. 1, New York City, record the adoption of the following resolutions March 3, 1865, following a notice of his death in the minutes of February 17:

Whereas, It hath pleased the G. A. of the U. to remove from our midst our Illustrious Bro. John J. J. Gourgas, P.P.G.C., of the 33d and last degree A. and A. Rite, after a pure and exalted life of four-score and eight years, sixty-two of which were devoted assiduously to the study and perfection of Sublime Freemasonry in the New World, and more particularly in the United States; therefore be it

Resolved, That while in the life of our departed Illustrious Brother Gourgas we recognize one of the ablest and brightest examples which can be emulated by every member of our time-honored Order, which he so highly advanced and so signally aided to perfect, and that in his demise, society and Sublime Masonry have suffered an irreparable loss.

Resolved, That this New York Grand Lodge of Perfection, No. 1, tender our sincere sympathies and condolence to the bereaved family of our departed brother, and that a copy of those resolutions, suitably engrossed, be presented to the same, in the name of this Grand Lodge of Perfection.

Resolved, That the M. P. Sov. G. Comr. of the Sup. G. Council be notified of the death of our Illustrious Brother, and be presented with a copy of these proceedings, and further for the purpose of considering the propriety of calling together a Lodge of Sorrow in commemoration of this sad event which has prompted this expression.

HENRY C. BANKS, 33°

J. H. HOBART WARD, 33°

O. H. HART, 33°,

CLINTON RICE, 33°

LOUIS F. MINARD, 33°

New York, Feb. 19th, A. D. 1865

CLINTON RICE, *Secretary*.

A SCOTTISH RITE LODGE OF SORROW, 1865

The minutes of Cosmopolitan Sovereign Consistory, New York, for February 23, 1865, record the passing of Gourgas as follows:

The Ill.^o. Comr.^o. in Chief (Ill.^o. Charles S. Westcott) announced in an appropriate and eloquent address, the death of our Ill.^o. P.^o. G.^o. Comr.^o. of the S.^o. G.^o. C.^o. John James Joseph Gourgas. When on Motion of Ill.^o. C. T. McClenachan, it was

Resolved, That the paraphernalia & furniture in this Consistory be draped in mourning for the period of ninety days, in honor of our late Ill.^o. Bro. Gourgas.

On motion of Ill.^o. Bro. J. H. H. Ward it was

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to draft resolutions of Condolence and Sympathy for the death of our late Ill.^o. Bro. Gourgas, and that a copy of the same be sent to the family of the deceased. (Committee appointed consisted of J. H. H. Ward, C. T. McClenachan and R. M. C. Graham.)

Ill.^o. Bro. McClenachan on behalf of La Union Française Lodge No. 17 invited this Consistory to attend a “Lodge of Sorrow” on the death of the late Bro. Gourgas on Thursday Ev’g next. On motion the invitation was accepted.

A FINAL TRIBUTE BY L’UNION FRANÇAISE LODGE NO. 17

It is most fitting that the Lodge in which Gourgas was first brought to Masonic light should pay him final honors in his old age and to be the last of the Masonic bodies to revere his memory with appropriate resolutions.

On January 23, 1865, just three weeks before the death of Gourgaz, the Secretary of L'Union Française recorded a verbal report of the Master of the Lodge, who had visited Gourgaz at his home. The Master stated that he had held a long and instructive conversation with Brother Gourgaz, who, in spite of his great age, was nevertheless in full possession of his intellectual faculties. The eighty-eight winters which had blanchéd his hair had not cooled the ardor of his blood, nor had they chilled his love for Freemasonry—neither had they arrested the generous pulsations of his heart toward all things noble, just and beautiful. No doubt could exist as to his being an honest man and a true Mason.

The Master then proposed that the diploma issued to Gourgaz when he was made a Mason be now endorsed with a certification that on this day—January 23, 1865—“as a souvenir of respect and fraternal affection to the Patriarch of Freemasonry in the United States of America, a just tribute of admiration of all the virtues and eminent qualities which distinguish the Very Illustrious and Very Dear Brother J. J. J. Gourgaz, honorary member of this Lodge, [be paid] for his long and persevering efforts for the triumph of our common work.” The proposal was heartily and unanimously concurred in.

The sad tidings of their aged member's passing were communicated to the Lodge on February 27, 1865. Inasmuch as the Brethren did not know of his death in time to pay him final honors, and to accompany the remains to their final resting place, it was proposed to hold a lodge of sorrow. The details of the solemn service and the beautiful eulogy delivered by W. Bro. F. A. Richshoffer, Master of the Lodge, are recorded in full in the minutes, from which the following formal resolutions are extracted, written by John W. Simons, P.G.M., Past Master of the Lodge:

Whereas, It has pleased the Grand Architect of the Universe to call home another of his faithful servants, in the person of our loved and venerated Brother J. J. J. Gourgaz, for many years an active, and late

an honorary member of L'Union Française Lodge No. 17, who departed this life in this city, February 14th instant;

And Whereas, The eminent Masonic virtues that adorned his character and which, joined to his unceasing labors in the cause of Masonry during a long and active and useful life, have rendered his name a household word among the craft in the Western world, call for something more than a passing notice from the brethren of this Lodge, with whose early history his name is identified, therefore,

Resolved, That it is with emotions of profound sorrow that we have learned of the decease of one so dear to us, and to whom we have been taught to look up as to a father; but while indulging in the grief so natural on such an occasion we find a supreme consolation in the reflexion that he has but left a world where the most perfect happiness accorded to man is ever disturbed by the shock of passions, and obscured by the clouds of sorrow and misfortune, to find an eternal home beyond the skies, in that promised haven of space and rest where sorrow is unknown. Ripe in years spent in the practice of those virtues which most ennoble mankind, and full of honors he has sunk calmly and hopefully to sleep, without regrets for the past or doubts for the future. A shining example we can strive to emulate, but never hope to exceed.

Resolved, That we sincerely and fraternally condole with the afflicted family of our deceased brother in this bereavement; which has deprived them of a loved and honored parent, and us of a wise counsellor.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions made official, be sent to the family of our lamented brother.

(Signed) F. A. RICHSHOFFER, Ven.°.

A. S. RICHSHOFFER, Secret.°.

The Minutes conclude with an eloquent and touching tribute, pronounced in French by Worshipful Master Richshoffer, in which he emphasized not only Gourgas' services to Freemasonry, but his private and domestic virtues.

FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

(1) Writing to Lieutenant Grand Commander Giles Fonda Yates, 33°, on May 22, 1848, Gourgas continued in a personal vein and among other things said:

“Tomorrow 23d I will be as old as the great U. S. A. Republic & on 4th July, your *first* celebration, I was baptized at our St. Pierre's Cathedral at Geneva. I have *six* God mothers and all of them sisters, & one God Father, their brother. What do you think of that, friend Yates?”

(2) The Edict of Nantes had been promulgated by Henry IV of France in 1598, and secured religious liberty to French Protestants after several decades of Roman Catholic persecution. It was greatly disliked by the Roman Catholic clergy, and some modifications were made to conciliate them. However, they persisted in their opposition until the Edict was revoked by Louis XIV October 18, 1685. French Protestants were deprived of all religious and civil liberties, resulting in their flight to more tolerant countries. Among them was the Gourgas family, which had lived in Languedoc, a province of southeastern France.

(3) The Swiss birth and antecedents of Gourgas are depicted in the following quotation: “The refugees found protection in various countries. The principal portion of the emigrants from Languedoc and the southeastern provinces of France crossed the frontier into Switzerland, and settled there, and afterwards proceeded into the states of Prussia, Holland, and Denmark, as well as into England and Ireland.” (*The Huguenots in France After the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, by Samuel Smiles, pp. v-vi [New York, 1874].)

(4) While the present text was in progress, announcement was made in the current press of an English translation of the original Mencken work, bearing title of *The Charlatanry of the Learned*, which carries a foreword by H. L. Mencken, editor of the *Baltimore Sun*. The iconoclastic work of the European author, Johann Burkhard Mencken (1674-1732), professor of history at the University of Leipzig, was so suggestive of the modern critic by the same name that inquiry was made as to a possible relationship. It was learned that H. L. Mencken is descended from the original author's father's cousin. The first work was published in Latin as *De Charlataneria Eruditorum*, and appeared also in German, French and Spanish.

(5) John Mark Gourgas kept a personal financial journal as a youth in London covering the years 1783 to 1787, when employed with Mr. John Lincadou, then a London merchant and a Genevan friend of the elder Gourgas. It is an intimate picture of a young man's life of the times. He enjoyed a game of skittles, and recorded his winnings as "gagné au jeu,"—gained at play. He was most proficient, for only two entries appear on losses. He bet with Grandpapa Du Pan that the sex of an unborn dog—"le chien de Mr. Jeannot"—would be a female. He won £6-4-6. He bought many books; was charitable to the unfortunate; and was not averse to entertaining ladies. On May 8, 1784, he spent nine shillings for having "Regalé une Gourmande appelée Lucy"—a most revealing entry! He had a sense of humor, as shown by certain entries, of which the following is typical: "Feb. 8, 1787. Donné a Mad. Terroux, pauvre diablesse femme d'un écrivain, 1/-." (Gave to Madame Terroux, a poor female devil of a writer, one shilling.)

(6) Milton was the first town in a corporate capacity to extend the benefits of vaccination to its inhabitants, an act largely, if not entirely, attributable to John Mark Gourgas. After his marriage in 1798, he lived in Camberwell, England, where he met Dr. John Lettson, a follower of Dr. Edward Jenner (1749-1823), the discoverer of vaccination. Through Lettson, John Mark Gourgas became much interested in the subject, and was one of a committee on vaccination for Milton which issued a circular on the subject, also signed by the selectmen of the town. An original manuscript "Report of the committee for Vaccination, Milton, 30th October 1809," together with a brochure, *The Cow Pox Act with the Order of the Legislature; and a Communication, relative to the subject, from the Selectmen of the Town of Milton*. . . . [Boston, 1810], is in the Gourgas Archives.

(7) It must be noticed that the Lodge, keeping its records in French, also followed the French Masonic calendar of the period, in which the first month of the year was March, instead of January. Hence the second day of the fourth month of the year of the True Light, 5806, is June 2, 1806, rather than April 2, 1806, as is sometimes given for the date of Gourgas' admission to the Fraternity.

(8) The Rose Croix degrees of Freemasonry, all of eighteenth century origin, must not be confused with the Rosierucian degrees of an alchemical nature, which are of much earlier origin. Rosierucianism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is a system entirely different from that of speculative Freemasonry which came into organized existence, as we know it today, in the eighteenth century.

(9) The manuscript ritual given to Desdoity, Tardy, Gourgas and Des Saulles for the Thirty-second Degree, bearing the attestations of these four brethren, is in the Archives of the Supreme Council. In an accom-

panying book, made at the same time, are the texts for the Nineteenth to the Twenty-second Degrees, inclusive, and the Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth.

(10) It is generally believed that only such lodges as can trace their origin to the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland or Scotland are regular. This is far from being the case, for there are Grand Lodges of Scottish Rite origin which are accepted without question in the fellowship of Masonic powers, and there also exist governing bodies of other systems, such as the Swedish Rite, which is recognized by both Symbolic Masonry and Scottish Rite alike.

(11) The correspondence exchanged by Holbrook and Gourgass may be consulted in the *Official Bulletin of the Supreme Council, 33°*, S.J. See Vols. VII, pp. 315 *et seq.*, and Vol. X, pp. 178 *et seq.* The Holbrook originals are in the Archives at Boston, with photostats of the Gourgass originals which are still preserved in the Holbrook Register at Washington.

(12) Giles Fonda Yates (1798-1859) is another prominent figure whom American biographers have neglected. Mackey described him as one whose "gentle mien won the love, his virtues the esteem, and his profound but unobtrusive scholarship the respect of all who knew him." Graduating in 1816 as Master of Arts, Union College, Schenectady, he commenced the study of law, and devoted himself seriously to the profession. He never married, but made his home with a sister. He was made a Mason in Morton Lodge No. 87, of New York, in 1820, and in 1826 affiliated with St. George's Lodge No. 6, Schenectady, serving it as Master in 1826 and again from 1844 to 1846. He was a Royal Arch Mason and Knight Templar, but his chief Masonic interests and activities were in the Scottish Rite.

(13) Gourgass was carried as Honorary Sovereign Grand Commander, and Yates as Grand Chancellor of the H.E.—an empty title, as the Rev. Albert Case functioned effectively in office as Secretary General.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dependable literature on Scottish Rite history is difficult to find. The early French works, upon which many American writers have drawn in the past, are not considered reliable in all details, and allowance must be made for partisan viewpoints. This also applies to American Scottish Rite histories, such as the writings of Folger, Peckham and Furniss. The best concise account is Grand Commander James D. Richardson's brochure, a reproduction of a centennial address made in Washington in 1901, also available in the Proceedings of that year, (pp. 193-224). Volume IX of the "Little Masonic Library," *A History of the York and Scottish Rites of Freemasonry*, by Henry Ridgely Evans, Litt.D., 33°, is an

admirable essay as far as it goes, but limitations of space hindered this capable Masonic scholar from giving us full an account as would be desired. It was not until the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction issued *The Supreme Council 33°* (1931) and *The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry* (1932), that detailed texts were officially published.

The story of the Northern Jurisdiction was buried in ephemeral magazines and controversial pamphlets of the last century until Samuel Harrison Baynard, Jr., 33°, was commissioned to write his *History of the Supreme Council, 33°, A.A.S.R., N.M.J., and Its Antecedents* (to appear in printed form in 1938). This is an exhaustive history of the Northern Supreme Council and of the background against which it rests. Mention must not be omitted of Enoch Terry Carson's contribution to the American edition (Yorston & Co., Philadelphia, 1889) of Gould's *History of Freemasonry*, which is a scholarly analysis of the background and of moot points, especially of the authorship of the Grand Constitutions of 1786, attributed to Frederick the Great. The recent edition of Gould's *History of Freemasonry Throughout the World* (Scribner's, New York, 1936) has an excellent outline of Scottish Rite history written by Charles Hadley Spilman, 33°, Grand Secretary General of the Northern Masonic Jurisdiction. (See Vol. V, pp. 506-33).

Data for the present text on Gourgas were drawn from numerous sources, chiefly records, documents and letters in the Archives of the Supreme Council, many of which had not been examined critically until Ill.' Bro. Baynard studied them. The accompanying Gourgas bibliography is a by-product, so to speak, of the researches made when working with Ill.' Bro. Baynard in the preparation of his compendious volumes. Though the history of the *organization* was the principal objective of the essential researches, biographical data could not be ignored, especially those of the early members, whose life blood was mixed with the mortar cementing the Masonic structure into one solid edifice. The human equation was always to the fore, and markedly so in the history of the early days. Gourgas and his associates were resurrected from mouldy archives and dusty pages of the past to become once more men of flesh and blood.

GENEALOGICAL REFERENCES

The details of the Gourgas family history were obtained from many sources, too numerous to itemize herein. They are to be found in family papers, New England town histories, and source books in the New England Historical and Genealogical Society and the Massachusetts Historical Society. Much still remains to be done in making further investigations, especially in France, Switzerland and England. As the condensed gene-

alogy presented herein is the first compilation ever made, the biographer submits it as a *tentative* record, covering only three years of research, and it is subject to correction and elaboration in keeping with facts not known at the moment.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Mr. John Mark Gourgass, and to the historical and genealogical societies mentioned, for access to records in their possession; to Ill. Samuel Harrison Baynard, Jr., 33°, and Ill. Henry Ridgely Evans, Litt.D., 33°, for their courtesy in reviewing the original manuscript; to Bro. Maurice Franck, 32°, the Historian of L'Union Française Lodge No. 17, F. & A. M., New York City, for data from original records which have definitely settled long disputed points as to Gourgass' membership and activities in his mother lodge; and to Bro. Harold Van Buren Voorhis, 32°, for search of New York City publications and records.

APPENDIX

A TENTATIVE GENEALOGY OF THE GOURGAS FAMILY

As the present monograph on John James Joseph Gourgas is the first extensive biography to be published upon any member of the family, it is not amiss to include brief genealogical data dealing with the family as a whole. An exhaustive genealogy, replete with all related facts that may be known, is in preparation.

The first known ancestor on the maternal side is:

- A. REV. PAUL DURANT, born————; died Gallargues, France, after 1661. His last will and testament is dated April 26, 1654. He was married June 5, 1614, to Susanne d'Engarras. His second wife was Louisa Ducros. Two children are known of the first marriage, Rev. Henry Durant and Lieutenant Colonel Charles Louis Durant. Bernardina Durant was a child of the second marriage. *Portrait No. 1.**
- Aa. REV. HENRY DURANT, born————; died 1725. He succeeded his father as pastor of the Reformed Church at Gallargues, France. He married, January 10, 1657, de Couze de Ducrod. *Portrait No. 2.*
- Ab. LIEUT. COLONEL CHARLES LOUIS DURANT. Born————; died at Rolle, Lake Geneva, August 18, 1746. Last will and testament was written June 1, 1746. *Portrait No. 3.*
- Ac. BERNARDINA DURANT, "of Esquivives, Languedoc," born 1661; died Geneva, Switzerland, May 27, 1729. A heroic woman who suffered imprisonment because of her Protestant belief and was "distinguished for piety, integrity and opulence." She was the second wife of Jean Gourgas II of Sommières. *Portrait No. 4.*
1. ————GOURGAS. (Reserved for further researches.)
2. JEAN GOURGAS I, merchant, born Sommières, France, son of ————Gourgas (1, *supra*). His first wife was Susanne Quarde (or Inarde?). His second wife was Miss Salomè Subremonde, of Massilargues, (daughter of Laurent and Catherine Subremonde), whom he married December 1, 1639. His last will and testament is dated October 31, 1654. Four children, 2a to 2d,

* Portrait numbers refer to oil paintings in the family archives, and not to illustrations on Plates IV and V in this brochure. Portraits and miniatures exist which are not mentioned herein.

inclusive, were born of the first marriage, and four, 2e to 2h, inclusive, of the second.

- 2a. JEAN GOURGAS II. Born at Sommières, France, 1631; died there, while on a visit from Geneva, October 13, 1699. He married Jeanne Bosquet on December 1, 1639, and contracted a second marriage in 1681, his spouse being Bernardina Durant (*Ac, supra*). *Portrait No. 9.*
- 2b. LOUISA GOURGAS.
- 2c. ———GOURGAS, widow of Jacques Fraissenet of Montagnac.
- 2d. ———GOURGAS, widow of Antoine Bedors. Had a daughter Jeanne.
- 2e. CLAUDINE GOURGAS, wife of Francis Faisant.
- 2f. JEANNE GOURGAS, wife of Jacob Jullian. They had two sons, Jacob and André.
- 2g. ETIENNE GOURGAS. He had a daughter Marguerite.
- 2h. AUDIBERT GOURGAS.

* * * *

JEAN GOURGAS II (2a *supra*) had at least three children by his second wife, Bernardina Durant (1c *supra*), as follows:

- 3a. LOUISE GOURGAS, who married John Begon. He died at Geneva in 1730; an oil portrait of him is extant.
- 3b. BERNARDINA GOURGAS, who married———Lemery. They retained the Catholic faith, thereby qualifying as heirs to the Gourgass property at Sommières, France. From them several existing Gourgass family portraits were obtained in 1762.
- 3c. JEAN LOUIS GOURGAS I. Born in Geneva, Switzerland, May 3, 1699; died there August 8, 1756. He married Anne Marie Perachon (*See portrait*), born October 25, 1709, died Geneva, May 15, 1781, on October 18, 1731. (Her parents were Philibert Perachon (*See portrait*) and Ann Marie Japin Perachon (*See portrait*). The children born of this union were six, 4a to 4f, inclusive. *Portrait No. 5.*
- 4a. JEANNE ELIZABETH GOURGAS, who married Rev. Jean Ami Martin, a Protestant clergyman.
- 4b. JEAN LOUIS GOURGAS II. Born Geneva, December 24, 1738; died Dorchester, Massachusetts, February 23, 1819. Buried at Weston, Massachusetts.
- 4c. CATHERINE GOURGAS, born November 15, 1741.
- 4d. PIERRE HENRY GOURGAS, who married Jeanne Marthe Rocca.
- 4e. CATON GOURGAS, who was living in 1797, at Camberwell, England.
- 4f. ANNE MARIE GOURGAS.

* * * *

JEAN LOUIS GOURGAS II (4b, *supra*) married Ulbiana Nicasia Du Pan, August 31, 1764. She was born in Holland, and died

in Boston, Massachusetts, during December, 1805, age 58. Her father was Marc Du Pan, a captain in the garrison of Geneva, and a councillor in the Council of Two Hundred. Her mother was Emerentia De Rengers, of Leyden, Holland. The father of Emerentia De Rengers was chamberlain to the Stadtholder, Prince of Orange. *Portrait No. 5.*

The children of this union were:

- 5a. JEAN MARC GOURGAS, born Geneva, March 9, 1766; died Weston, Massachusetts, December 8, 1846.
- 5b. JEAN JACOB GOURGAS, born Geneva October 8, 1768; died Boston, or vicinity, *circa* 1822. Married Mary Benjamina Woodbridge Alleyne, November 30, 1806. Four children. Mason.
- 5c. JOHANNE GOURGAS. Born Geneva, Switzerland, *circa* 1770; said to have died of yellow fever in New Orleans. Death reported in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1807. Mason.
- 5d. CATHERINE HENRIETTE GOURGAS, born Geneva, February 4, 1771; died unmarried at Camberwell, England, January 23, 1800.
- 5e. CLARISSE AIMÉE GOURGAS, born Geneva, October 30, 1774; died Geneva, June 11, 1796.
- 5f. JEAN JACQUES JOSEPH GOURGAS, born Geneva, May 23, 1777; died New York City, New York, February 14, 1865. (For further details see text of this monograph.) Mason.
- 5g. ADELE GOURGAS, born———; died Cincinnati, Ohio, March 28, 1843. She married John Dubois. No children.

JEAN JACQUES JOSEPH GOURGAS (5f *supra*) married Louisa Maria Smidt, who was buried February 2, 1854, in New York Bay Cemetery, Jersey City, N. J. There are believed to have been six children—John J. J., Jr., born January 9, 1808, died July 28, 1855; Louis, no data available; Eliza, no data available; Louise Marie, born 1818, died Weston, Mass., November 7, 1883, married her cousin John Lewis Gourgass; both were buried November 14, 1883, in New York Bay Cemetery, in Gourgass plot; Ulbiana E. H., who died at the age of 61 and was buried August 5, 1884; and Frederick William, born August 8, 1813, died September 9, 1863, and is buried in the family plot at Jersey City. *This line is believed extinct.*

* * * *

Apparently not only is the Jean Jacques Joseph Gourgass line extinct, but also that of his two older brothers, Johanne Gourgass and Jean Jacob Gourgass. The family name has been preserved, however, through the descendants of the oldest brother. Details concerning him and his descendants follow:

JEAN MARC GOURGAS (5a *supra*), married Peggy Sampson (born December 25, 1766, died Weston, Mass., January 19, 1839) of Camberwell, England, February 21, 1798. Their children were:

- 6a. Peggy, born in England. Died Weston, Mass.
- 6b. Margaret Ulbiana, born in England, died Concord, Mass., July 17, 1875.
- 6c. Clarissa Maria, born in England, died Milton, Mass., November 14, 1805.
- 6d. John Mark, born Milton Upper Falls, Mass., March 25, 1804, died Roxbury, Mass., June 28, 1862.
- 6e. Ann Mary, born Milton, Mass., January 25, 1806, died Boston, Mass., November 6, 1867.
- 6f. Francis [Richard], born Dorchester, Mass., August 22, 1811, died July 12, 1853. Was State Senator. (Married and left descendants.) Mason.
- 6g. John Lewis, born Milton, Mass., December 23, 1808, died Weston, Mass., October 5, 1883. He married his cousin, Louisa Maria, daughter of John J. J. Gourgass. No children.

* * * *

FRANCIS [RICHARD] GOURGAS (6f, *supra*) married at Weston, Mass., Abigail Pierce Hastings, May 8, 1836, of a family tracing its history to the Conquest. She died at Concord, Mass., February 24, 1896. Their children were:

- 7a. Abby Margaret, born Concord, Mass., March 2, 1837, died Concord, February 7, 1919.
- 7b. Francis Richard, born Concord, Mass., February 11, 1843, died Brookline, Mass., October 3, 1925. Married, leaving one son.
- 7c. John Mark, born Concord, November 23, 1845, died Concord, January 29, 1919.

* * * *

FRANCIS RICHARD GOURGAS (7b *supra*), married Mary Josephine Beatley, at Brooklyn, N. Y., June 22, 1904. (She was born May 26, 1867, died Concord, Mass., June 13, 1934.) They left one son, who is believed to be the last scion of the Gourgass family in America:

- 8a. John Mark Gourgass IV, born Brooklyn, N. Y., March 2, 1916.

* * * *

As this volume goes to press, Célestin Pierre Cambiaire, Ph.D., Officer d'Académie, author of *Le Rôle de la France dans l'Expansion des Etats-Unis* [Paris, 1925], writes:

"I have no doubt that the names Gourgass, Gourgass and Gourgass are various spellings of the same name. There are several *Gourgass* families in Louisiana.

"In 1567, a French Protestant named *Dominique de Gourgass* (born at Mont de Marsan, France, in 1530), sailed to Florida where the Span-

iards had tortured and hanged a small colony of French Huguenots who had settled there and were without weapons of any kind with which to protect themselves. That small colony had been founded by Jean Ribaud, a French Huguenot. He and his companions were living peacefully and happily, surrounded by Indians who were friendly to them and admired them. The Spaniards massacred the entire colony, sparing neither women nor children. After hanging all the members of the small settlement, they left a sign near the bodies with these words: HANGED AS HERETICS. The Spaniards left a large troop of soldiers, all well armed, and made use of the buildings which the Huguenots had erected. In addition, they built a strong fort and mounted cannons to protect it.

"Gourgues arrived in due course with a few Frenchmen on a small ship, attacked the Spaniards, made prisoners of all who had not been killed and then hanged them in retaliation for the indignities the Spaniards had inflicted upon the Huguenots. He erected a sign near the hanged men bearing the words: HANGED, NOT AS SPANIARDS, BUT AS ASSASSINS.

"Gourgues did not lose a man in the conflict. After taking his just revenge and destroying the entire Spanish colony in Florida, he returned to France."

Mont de Marsan, where Dominique de Gourgues was born, is in the Département des Landes, in the south of France. The exact date of the attack on the Spaniards was April 18, 1568. The avenging Frenchman returned to La Rochelle on June 6, 1568, where he was received in great triumph, but the hatred toward the Huguenots was so great at the French court that he was regarded almost as a criminal, and circumstances forced him to go into hiding at Rouen to avoid the officers of Philip II, King of Spain. De Gourgues died at Tours in 1593.

ADDENDA

Louisa Maria Smidt Gourgas, wife of John James Joseph Gourgas, was born *circa* 1786, in Switzerland, and died November 3, 1831, presumably in New York City, burial being in "St. John's Ground." Her remains were reinterred in New York Bay Cemetery, Jersey City, New Jersey, February 2, 1854.

The grave of J. Lewis Gourgas, presumably a son of John James Joseph Gourgas, has been found in the same cemetery. He was born in Newark, N. J., and died November 5, 1869, aged 60 years, 2 months and 11 days. His occupation was that of broker, with residence at 245 East 55th St., New York City.

These newly discovered facts will alter statements under "The Home Life of Gourgas" in Chapter I, and in the genealogical tables above.

INDEX

	PAGE		PAGE
ADVERTISEMENT		Council of 200, Geneva.....	5
of Consistory	26	Cow Pox Act	55
Albany, N. Y.	37		
Albany Lodge of Perfection... 29		DALCHO, Frederick	31
Alleyne, Mary Benjamina		de Duero, de Couze	59
Woodbridge	61	d'Engarras, Susanne	4, 59
Allocution of Grand Commander ix		de Gourgues, Dominique	62
"American Freemason,"		De Grasse Tilly, Count	
Louisville	48	A.F.A.	16, 17, 22
Anti-Masonry	ix, 25, 30, 34	De Grasse, Admiral	16
Archives, purchase for	48	Delahogue, J. B. M. N.	16, 17
Atwood, Henry C.	40	De La Motta, Emanuel	23, 26
Aurora Grata Lodge of			27, 30
Perfection	27	De Rengers, Helen	
		Emerentiane	5, 61
BAKER, Reuel	37	De Rengers, J. J. J. Du Pan... 5	
Banks, Henry C.	51	Desloity, Jean Baptiste	22, 26, 55
Baynard history quoted	41	Des Portes, Swiss Regiment of 4	
Baynard, Jr., Samuel H., 30, 56, 58		Des Saulles, John	28
Beatley, Mary Josephine	62	Des Saulles, Louis	22, 26, 28, 55
Bedors, Antoine	60	Dias & Crassous	19
Begon, John	60	Drake, Sir Francis	7
Begon, Louise Gourgues	60	Drummond, Josiah H.	48
Bideand, Antoine	22, 26	Dublin Royal Arch	23
Bideand Grand Consistory	27	Dubois (of New York)	21
Blocquerst, A. J.	29	Dubois, John	6, 61
Bookplate, Gourgues	10	Ducros, Louisa	5, 59
Bosquet, Jeanne	4, 60	Du Pan, Capt. Marc	5, 55
Boston Council P. of J.	37	Du Pan, Ulbiana Nicasia	60
Boston Lodge of Perfection	37	Du Peyrat, Peter Adrian	22, 28
Boston, Mass.	9, 19, 34, 37, 61, 62	Duplessis, Peter L. B.	28
Bull, Archibald	37	Durant, Bernardina	4, 5, 59, 60
		Durant, Lt. Col. Charles Louis, 4, 59	
CALENDAR, French Masonic	55	Durant, Rev. Henry	4, 59
Cambiaire, Célestin Pierre	62	Durant, Rev. Paul	4, 59
Carlyle (quoted)	10		
Carson, Enoch Terry	56	EDICT of Nantes	54
Cart, A.	28	Emperors of the East and West 15	
Case, Rev. Albert	56	England, Grand Lodge of	14
Cerneau, Joseph	27	England, Scottish Rite in	47
Cerneauism	31, 34, 42	Escot, J. P.	19, 20
Charleston, S. C.	16, 27, 30	Estate, Gourgues	6
	31, 33, 34	Evans, Henry Ridgely	56, 58
Cholera epidemic 1832	30		
Christie, John	37	FOLGER, Robert B.	20, 56
Concord "Freeman"	6	Franck, Maurice	58
Concordia Crescimus		Francken, Henry Andrew	15
Council Princes of Jerusalem 27		Fraissenet, Jacques	60
Council of Princes established		French Masonry	44
in Boston, 1842	34	French Masonry in America	17

	PAGE		PAGE
French Revolution	7, 8	Gourgas, John Lewis	61, 62
French Rite	24	Gourgas, John Mark	6, 9, 11 55, 61
Freemasonry, Anglo Saxon genius of	32	Gourgas II, John Mark	62
Freemasonry, General back- ground of	13	Gomrgas III, John Mark	62
Freemasonry introduced in France	14	Gourgas IV, John Mark	58, 62
Furniss, John F.	56	Gourgas, Louis	11, 61
		Gourgas, Louisa	60
GALLEN (ship)	9	Gourgas, Louise Maria (Smidt)	10
Gallargues, Reformed Church of	4	Gourgas, Louise	60
Genealogical records	59-63	Gourgas, Louise Marie	11, 61, 62
Geneva, Council of 200	5, 61	Gourgas, Margaret	9
Geneva, Garrison of	5	Gourgas, Margaret Ulbiana	61
Geneva, Switzerland	x, 4, 5, 47 54, 59, 60, 61	Gourgas, Marguerite	60
Gifts of King	4	Gourgas, Peggy	9, 62
Gould's History	57	Gourgas, Pierre Henry	60
Gourgas, Abby Margaret	62	Gourgas, Ulbiana E. H.	11, 61
Gourgas, Adèle	6, 9, 61	Gourges, ———	62
Gourgas, André	60	Gourgues, Dominique de	62
Gourgas, Ann Mary	62	Graham, R. M. C.	51
Gourgas, Anne Marie	60	Grand Consistory of New York	22
Gourgas, Audibert	60	Grand Constitutions	31
Gourgas, Catherine	60	Grand Constitutions, 1762	15, 27
Gourgas, Catherine Henriette	6, 61	Grand Constitutions, 1786	17, 28
Gourgas, Caton	60	Grand Lodges, origin of	56
Gourgas, Clarissa Maria	9, 62		
Gourgas, Clarisse Aimée	6, 61	HART, O. H.	51
Gourgas, Eliza	11, 61	Hastings, Abigail Pierce	62
Gourgas, Etienne	60	Havre Packet Association	48
Gourgas, Francis R.	6, 62	Hays, Edmund Burke	40, 42
Gourgas, Francis Richard, Jr.	62	Hays, Moses Michael	15
Gourgas, Frederick William	11, 12, 61	Hays-Raymond Supreme Council	42
Gourgas, Jacob	60	Henry IV of France	54
Gourgas I, Jean	4, 59	Hicks, Elias	29
Gourgas II, Jean	4, 5, 59, 60	High grades, Masonic	10
Gourgas, Jean Jacques Joseph	61	Holbrook, Moses	30, 31, 56
Gourgas I, Jean Louis	5, 7, 59	Hoofstetter, Daniel	8
Gourgas II, Jean Louis	5, 60	Huguenots	3, 43, 54, 63
Gourgas, Jeanne	60		
Gourgas, Jeanne Elizabeth	60	INARDE (?), Susanne	59
Gourgas, Jeanne Marthe Rocca	60		
Gourgas, Johanne	6, 21, 22, 61	JACOBS, ABRAHAM	23, 27
Gourgas, John or Joseph	11	Japin, Annie Marie	60
Gourgas, John Jacob	6, 9, 61	Jeannot, Mr.	55
Gourgas, John James Joseph—see Syllabus, page xi, for references. See also page 61.		Jenner, Dr. Edward	55
Gourgas, John L.	11	Jones, E. H.	ix
		Jullian, Jacob	60
		Jullian, Jeanne Gourgas	60
		KENNING, George	49
		Knight of the Sun, 23°	23

	PAGE		PAGE
LA CANDEUR Lodge		PANIC of 1837.....	30
No. 12	16, 22	Peckham, Wm. H.....	56
La Chelle, Achille Huet.....	17, 18	Peixotto, Moses L. M.....	26
La Réunion Française Lodge..	16	Perachon, Anne Marie.....	5, 7, 60
Lemery, ———	60	Perachon, Ann Marie Japin...	60
Leonard, Hannah E. G.....	12	Perachon, Philibert	60
Leonard, J. J. G.....	12	Perfection, Rite of.....	15
Leonard, John W.....	12	Philadelphia, Pa.....	12, 15, 29, 34
Les Amis Choisis Lodge.....	28	Philip II of Spain.....	63
Lescot, J. P.....	19	Pike, Albert	32, 33
Lettson, Dr. John.....	55	Port au Prince.....	15
Lewis, Mrs.	9	Portraits (footnote)	59
Library	7	Portsmouth, N. H.....	37
Lodge of Sorrow.....	22, 51	Prince of Orange	61
Long, Hyman Isaac	16	Publicity decried	25
Louis XIV	3, 54		
Lucadon, John	55	QUARDE, Susanne	4, 59
L'Union Française Lodge...17, 18			
19, 20, 51, 52, 53, 58		RAYMOND, Edward Asa...23, 25	
L'Unité Americaine Lodge.... 17		37, 40	
		Revived Raymond Supreme	
MC CARTHY, James W..... ix		Council	42
McClennahan, C. T.....	51	Revocation of the Edict of	
Mackenzie, K. R. H.....	49	Nantes	54
Mackey, Albert Gallatin..32, 49, 56		Ribaud, Jean	63
Manuscripts purchased	48	Rice, Clinton	51
Martin, Rev. Jean Ami.....	60	Richard, Stephen	19
Mencken, H. L.	54	Richardson, Jas. D.....	56
Mencken, Johann Burkhard...7, 54		Richshoffer, A. S.	53
Mexican War	38	Richshoffer, F. A.....52, 53	
Milton, Mass.....9, 55, 60, 61, 62		Riker, Richard	26
Minard, Louis F.....	51	Rite of Perfection.....15, 24	
Mitchell, Lt. Col. John.....	16	Rituals, loss of	31
Monastic life	13	Rituals 19°-22°	56
Montagnac, France	60	Rituals 23°-26°	23
Moore, Charles Whitlock....37, 38		Rituals 27°-28°	56
Morin, Stephen	15	Rocca, Jeanne Marthe	60
Morris, Rob	48	Rose Croix	18, 55
		Rose Croix d'H-R-D-M.....	22
NEW ORLEANS, La.	34	Rosierneian degrees	22, 55
Newport, R. I.....	34	Rosierneianism	55
New York Bay Cemetery, ix, 12, 61		Royal Exchange, London....43, 47	
New York Grand Lodge			
of Perfection	50	ST. GEORGE'S Lodge	56
New York Mercantile Adviser..	26	St. Laurent, Count	29
New York Saturday Courier...	49	Sampson, Peggy	61
New York, N. Y....9, 12, 17, 18, 19		San Domingo	15
22, 26, 27, 49, 50, 51		Schenectady, N. Y.....	56
Norfolk, Va.....	34	Scottish Rite in England.....	47
		Secret Constitntions, 1761...15, 29	
OBITUARY notices	49-53		31

	PAGE		PAGE
Select Masons of 27.....	23	Triple Union Rose Croix.....	18
Simson, Sampson	26	Triple Unité, Baltimore.....	18
Simons, John W.....	21, 52	UNION College, Schenectady..	56
Small pox and vaccination.....	55	VACCINATION introduced....	55
Smidt, Louisa Maria.....	11	Van Rensselaer, Killian H....	37, 40 41, 42
Smiles, Samuel	54	Van Rensselaer Supreme	
Sovereign Grand Consistory,		Council	42
1807	27	Verriere, Ossonde	15
Spilman, Charles H.	56	Victor Amadeus II.....	4
Spitzer, Barend M.....	15	Voltaire	14
Subremonde, Catherine	59	Voorhis, Harold V. B.....	58
Subremonde, Laurent	59	WARD, J. H. Hobart.....	51
Subremonde, Salomè	4, 59	Washington, George	16
Supreme Council French		Westcot, Charles S.....	51
West Indian Islands.....	22	Weston, Mass.....	5, 6, 9, 11, 35 43, 60, 61, 62, 63
Supreme Council N.M.J.		Woodford, A. F. A.....	49
formed	28	YATES, Giles Fonda	ix, 23, 30 31, 35, 36, 37, 38, 56
Supreme Council N.M.J.		Yorston History	57
moved to Boston.....	37	ZIMMERMAN, M.	11
Supreme Council S.J. formed..	16		
TARDY, John Gabriel...17, 18, 21			
22, 25, 26, 55			
Terroux, Madame	55		
Tompkins, Daniel D.....	26, 28		
Triple Amité Rose Croix.....	18		

